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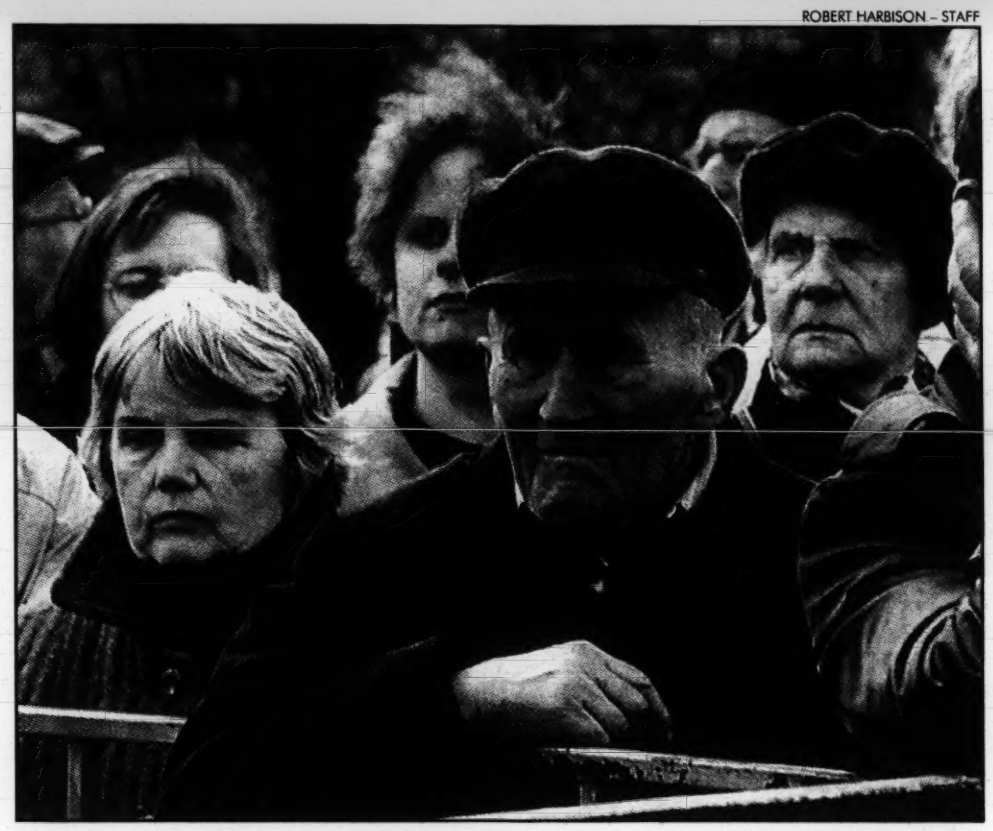
ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF



WARSAW: *A remarkable economic transformation has opened the way for thousands of new capitalists, but officials are struggling to ease frustration caused by high unemployment.*

POST-COMMUNIST RECOVERY

THROUGH ingenuity and persistence, Poland is creating a market-based economy and a democratic society.

The country has turned the corner in its transition from communist rule. It is the first Eastern European state to emerge from severe post-communist recession, with private enterprise acting as a powerful motor. More than half of working Poles hold jobs in the private sector, and most trade has been redirected from East to West.

With each passing month, Warsaw looks more prosperous – from its brand new international airport to its well-dressed pedestrians.

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But Poland is not just Warsaw. In depressed agricultural regions and dying one-industry towns, unemployment and frustration pull at reforms like a dangerous undertow. Even in the capital, recovery has left some citizens behind.

This current of discontent may well sweep Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka out to sea when the parliament takes up a vote of no confidence in her government tomorrow. Political instability, however, is nothing new to Poland.

As observers point out, Poles have had four governments in as many years and still manage to move forward.

BATTLE ON CAPITOL HILL

Senior-Citizen Lobby Gears Up for Fight To Preserve Benefits

Plan to eliminate energy tax shifts focus to entitlements

By Linda Feldmann
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

WORD is going out to senior-citizen centers, church groups, and older activists: Uncle Sam may want you to take an across-the-board cut in your government benefits.

Last week's proposal by several key senators to cap the government's so-called entitlement programs – those that provide benefits to all who qualify, such as Social Security, Medicare, and food stamps – has sent shock waves through the interest groups that represent senior citizens.

Although it's too soon to gauge the volume of calls and letters to Capitol Hill, the top generals in the senior-citizen lobby are hoping their troops will come through with a massive response.

And though the interest groups say they cannot match the millions of dollars the energy industry has put into its campaign to defeat President Clinton's proposed energy tax, they say they have a more potent force behind them: popular sentiment and a constituency that votes.

"Our biggest power is that we are trying to represent public opinion," says John Rother, legislative director of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) – with 33 million members, one of Washington's most powerful lobbies.

Public opinion in favor of the programs that take care of the poor and senior citizens is strong across all age groups, not just the elderly, Mr. Rother says. But, in contrast with the poor, older Americans do turn up at the polls in high numbers. Voter turnout is consistently highest in the 50-to-70 age bracket.

AARP is spreading the message to its members through its various publications. It has also sent alerts out to its leaders positioned in every state, many of whom are on a first-name basis with their members of Congress. Next week's congressional break, during which many members

See **AARP** *page 4*

Ukrainians Worry Serb Win Augurs Conflict With Russia

By Daniel Sneider
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

KIEV, UKRAINE

IT is spring in Kiev, the citadel of ancient Rus and the capital of modern, independent Ukraine. Liberated from winter, Kievites stroll along tree-lined avenues, treading on a carpet of pink petals laid beneath the blooming chestnut trees.

The booming guns and snipers' bullets in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo are far away. Yet the civil war in the former republics of Yugoslavia reverberates increasingly loudly in Ukrainian minds.

Can the Yugoslav example be repeated here, among the former republics of the Soviet Union? many wonder. Will Russia emulate its brother Slavs in Serbia and try to create a 'greater Russia' in the name of aiding the large Russian population inside Ukrainian borders?

"Of course I am afraid of this," says Vyacheslav Chernovil, leader of the Ukrainian Rukh nationalist movement. Many here credit Russian President Boris Yeltsin with helping to ease confrontation over issues such as the division of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet.

Like many Ukrainians, Mr. Chernovil points to the statements of Russian politicians such as Vice President Alexander Rutskoi calling for the return of the Crimean peninsula to Russia. Nor is Rutskoi alone. A senior Russian diplomat here

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A Chorus of Voices
Rita Dove, the new US poet laureate, discusses the characters of memory and history who speak in her poems.
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INTERNATIONAL

Yeltsin Foils Parliamentary Rivalry

But Khasbulatov's expected downfall may not signal smoother political landscape in Russia

By Justin Burke
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin's thrust to adopt a new constitution has smashed the power base of his chief political rival, parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov.

Mr. Khasbulatov now finds himself on shaky political ground, as support for his leadership of the Supreme Soviet, or parliament, erodes sharply. Observers say he is destined to fade from the political scene soon.

But Khasbulatov's loss is not translating into large gains for the president, experts add. Mr. Yeltsin's team, while trying to create the impression that the nation backs his draft of a new constitution, in reality is being forced to back off earlier positions.

The big winners in the constitutional debate are shaping up as Russia's regions and autonomous areas, which are wielding increasing influence in the run-up to a Constitutional Assembly. The Assembly, to comprise representatives from across Russia, is scheduled to begin to discuss revisions to the drafts on June 5.

Yeltsin hopes a new constitution will grant the president sweeping powers and break the political stalemate between the executive and legislative branches that is paralyzing economic reforms. In his rush to adopt a new Basic Law, the president is depending heavily on the support of the regions and autonomous republics.

But by relying on the regions, Yeltsin could be digging his own grave in much the same way former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's fate was sealed by his ill-fated attempt to conclude a new union treaty during 1991.

"As the political struggle [deepens] and more concessions to the territories are made, this process could render the central authorities a useless fiction and ultimately lead to Russia's breakup," says Vladimir Pribilovsky, a political scientist at Moscow's Panorama Information Center. The territories are already flexing their muscle, throwing Yeltsin's team on the defensive. Originally the president hoped the Assembly would finalize the wording of the Basic Law, and then adopt it, thus bypassing the Congress of People's Deputies, which has opposed any new constitution.

But Yeltsin's hopes for quick passage were set back last week, when 11 of the nation's 22 autonomous ethnic republics issued a statement rejecting his draft constitution. The republics said the president's document did not sufficiently protect their rights, as outlined in the Federation Treaty signed last year.

And the leaders of some powerful Russian oblasts or regions – including Siberia's Novosibirsk and Irkutsk – criticize the draft as favoring the autonomous areas. They insist all regions enjoy the same status and rights.

The presidential draft received much negative feedback during a cross-country promotional tour by Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai, Yeltsin's point-man in the constitutional offensive.

Mr. Shakhrai indicated the president had effectively been forced to abandon plans for the assembly to adopt a new Constitution, because of regional opposition. Shakhrai also admitted that the general consensus held that Yeltsin's draft constitution should be merged with a version prepared by parliament's Constitutional Commission.

Merging the two documents would threaten Yeltsin's ability to secure a strong presidency, as outlined in his draft. The parliamentary version provides for supremacy of the legislative branch.

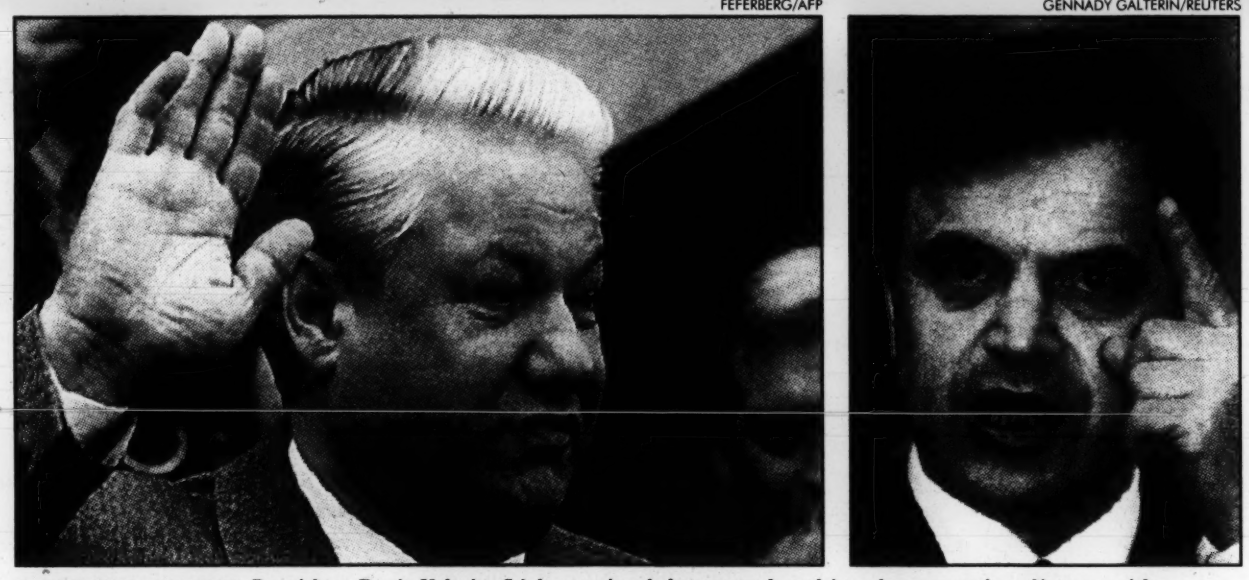
As for Khasbulatov – who has led the opposition's effort against Yeltsin – the adoption of any new constitution seems to spell the end of his tenure.

The defection of deputy speakers Nikolai Ryabov and Veniamin Sokolov from Khasbulatov's camp indicate that a struggle to lead a new, post-election parliament is already underway, he says. Messrs. Ryabov and Sokolov, as well as other parliamentary leaders, have broken with Khasbulatov by expressing limited support for the president's constitutional plans.

Many parliament members have long considered Khasbulatov's leadership inadequate, labeling the speaker an opportunist, interested only in retaining power. Khasbulatov, seeming to recognize that his days are numbered, is defending himself from such charges. "I completely dislike serving as speaker," he told journalists recently. "If I do it, it's only because I've always been used to trying my hardest."

As prospects dim for a fast realization of Yeltsin's plan, the debate seems to be shifting from the content of the Basic Law to the method for its adoption. Yeltsin's supporters may push for a national referendum or new parliamentary elections to win backing for a favorable constitution.

FEFERBERG/AFP GENNADY GALTERIN/REUTERS



RIVAL RUSSIAN LEADERS: *President Boris Yeltsin (l.) has gained the upper hand in a long-running dispute with parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, who has lost his power base in the constitutional battle.*

CRITICS SEE 'ONE-MAN' RULE IN YELTSIN DRAFT

■ President Boris Yeltsin's supporters say his draft constitution offers Russia the best hope for overcoming its current political crisis.

But Yeltsin opponents denounce the president's draft as politically expedient today, but fraught with danger for Russia tomorrow.

"It's written to serve a concrete individual [Yeltsin]. It's a single-use thing, like a disposable syringe," says Mr. Yeltsin's chief rival, parliament Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov.

"Yeltsin is possessed by only one idea – to retain power," political analyst Vladimir Pribilovsky added.

The two aspects of Yeltsin's draft that most concern scholars are provisions on presidential power and Russia's federal structure. Many scholars say the Yeltsin draft paves the way for dictatorship because it concentrates power in the executive's hands.

For example, the Yeltsin draft would allow the president to dissolve the parliament if the legislature refused to approve a candidate for prime minister. The president could also call elections and a referendum.

In addition, the Yeltsin draft abolishes the vice presidency and handicaps the legislature by requiring a majority vote of all elected deputies, not just a majority of those voting, to pass laws.

"If anything is borrowed from Russia's unique past experience, it's the political tradition of autocracy and Bolshevik one-man command," wrote legal scholar Vyacheslav Nikonov in the Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper.

The proposed federative structure is also facing criticism, with some saying it creates conditions for ethnic conflict. Yeltsin's draft would grant Russia's autonomous republics privileges not enjoyed by other regions. Some, including many republican leaders, call the proposals insufficient, while others say they give too much to the autonomies.

Mr. Nikonov said the Yeltsin draft showed Moscow suffers from a "mania to regulate everything," adding this "defective philosophy dooms the country to a growth of separatist tendencies."

Despite the supposed defects, most scholars say the Yeltsin draft is still better than a constitutional version drawn up by parliament's Constitutional Commission. "At least it [the Yeltsin draft] is a step in the right direction," Nikonov said.

– J. B.

Dueling Constitutional Drafts in Russia

THE YELTSIN DRAFT

Executive power

■ The president shall be the guarantor of the Constitution and of the rights and freedoms of citizens.

■ The president of the Russian Federation may, under circumstances and in conformity with procedures stipulated by the present Constitution, the Federal Treaty, and federal constitutional law, introduce a state of emergency with immediate notification of the Federal Assembly.

■ The President of the Russian Federation shall adopt decrees and issue orders.... The president of Russia shall have immunity.

Legislative power

■ The Federal Assembly – parliament of the Russian Federation – shall be the supreme representative federal organ of Russia. The Federal Assembly shall consist of two chambers: the Council of the Federation and the State Duma.

PARLIAMENT'S DRAFT

Legislative power

■ The only representative and legislative body of the Russian Federation is the Supreme Soviet ... The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation shall consist of two chambers; the State Duma and the Federal Assembly.

■ The Supreme Soviet shall, upon submission of presidential nominations, give its consent ... for the appointments of Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and members of the government of the Russian Federation; The Supreme Soviet appoints judges of the Constitutional Court ... and appoints, or relieves from his post the Chairman of the Russian Central Bank.

Executive power

■ The president of the Russian Federation is the head of state and supreme official of the Russian Federation. He shall represent the Russian Federation in all domestic and external relations.

In Moscow-Led Bosnia Peace Plan, Serbs See Failure of World Resolve

By Jonathan S. Landay
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE

SERB leaders of rump Yugoslavia have triumphantly embraced the new Moscow-led plan to contain the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, hailing the so-called "joint program of action" as a collapse of international resolve to act against the Bosnian Serbs.

These leaders say the plan's provision for establishing "safe havens" inside Bosnia shows the West has abandoned the Vance-Owen peace plan and recognizes the Bosnian Serbs' land gains.

The new plan, they say, vindicates the Serbs' contention that the war is not one of Serbian territorial aggression, but a civil and ethnic conflict in which the Bosnian Serbs have merely defended themselves.

"It is clear in the West that a conviction is ripening that peace can be achieved by recognition of the facts on the ground," declared Serbian Radical Party chief Vojislav Seselj, an ultra-nationalist suspected of war crimes. Bosnian Serbs now control 70 percent of the former Yugoslav republic.

For those reasons and the Bosnian government's opposition to the new plan, the initiative unveiled last weekend in Washington appears to be in trouble here even before it is fully enshrined in UN resolutions, political analysts say. Those analysts include diplomats whose countries concurred on the new approach.

The accord, agreed to by the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Spain, embodies a tradeoff: Washington persuaded Western Europe and Russia to drop the idea of forcibly imposing the Vance-Owen peace plan on the Bosnian Serbs; Western Europe and Moscow convinced Washington to abandon its call for combining air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs with an exemption for the Bosnian government from a UN-imposed arms embargo.

As a result, analysts say, Belgrade sees the new policy as a reconciliation of embarrassing policy differences at the expense of a get-tough approach.

"This action program is so feeble that it won't last," said one Western diplomat. "All it really was intended to do was to bridge the gaps between the United States, the Europeans and the Russians."

Key provisions of the plan call for the deployment of UN troops in "safe havens" declared around six Muslim-dominated enclaves and the maintenance of year-old UN economic sanctions on Belgrade as a means of pressuring it to coerce the Bosnian Serbs to relinquish conquered territories.

UN monitors would be deployed along rump Yugoslavia's border with Bosnia to ensure that Belgrade lives up to its pledge to cut supplies to the Bosnian Serb war machine as part of its decision to support the Vance-Owen plan.

Belgrade has raised serious objections to the deployment of UN monitors on its border with Bosnia. Those objections began emerging in full with the start of a two-day visit May 24 by special Russian envoy Vitaly Churkin.

Svetizar Stojanovic, the chief adviser to Yugoslav President Dobrica Cosic, told the Monitor that acceptance of the joint plan would weaken, not enhance, Belgrade's bargaining position with the Bosnian Serbs and "add to their fears and so to their resistance to take part in any plan or any constructive negotiations."

He said the new plan also would stoke an already serious political furor in rump Yugoslavia over the sudden endorsement of the Vance-Owen plan by President Cosic and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia.

"It would ... add to the arguments of the radical elements that we are selling out everything, including our sovereignty and dignity," Mr. Stojanovic said. "It is not simply political utility or calculation which is involved here, but also the ... dignity of the government."

He added: "I'm sure the Army is also against it."

Stojanovic suggested that the proposal to maintain the economically devastating sanctions will be counterproductive. Rather, he said, the international community should lift the embargo to ensure Belgrade's continued cooperation.

"Our people cannot understand any further constructive trades from our side unless the international community changes its approach into a more constructive and positive one," he said.

In his talks with Mr. Milosevic on May 25, Mr. Churkin, the Russian envoy, failed to ease the Serbs' objections.

Belgrade also objects a proposal in the joint plan to expand a UN peacekeeping force in the newly independent Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Political analysts believe that Belgrade's objections stem from concerns over having UN troops on Macedonia's border with Serbia's restive province of Kosovo.

The Serbs, they say, contend that a UN presence could encourage unrest among Kosovo's separatist Albanian majority in an attempt to provoke foreign intervention.

REUTERS

ON THE ADVANCE: *Bosnian Serbs fire between ruined houses in the Bosnian town of Brcko May 19. A plan promoted by Russia would allow Serbs to control what they have taken.*

UN WAR CRIMES BENCH

US: Women Needed On Bosnia Tribunal

By Ron Scherer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.

THE Clinton administration intends to press the United Nations to have women represented as judges and prosecutors on the UN's Bosnian war crimes tribunal.

According to United States officials, the inclusion of women is a key issue. The tribunal is expected to focus on the alleged organized rape of thousands of Muslim women by Serbs participating in the "ethnic cleansing" of the former Yugoslavia.

US officials maintain that the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which has voiced concern over atrocities committed against Bosnian Muslim women, supports their push for female representation.

It is unclear how receptive the world community will be toward the effort. Women have never sat on the International Court of Justice in The Hague. "It is time for these international legal organizations to have the representation of women," said a Clinton official briefing reporters at the UN.

The issue of including women is just one of the many details that the UN Security Council will have to address after it passes a pending resolution on the war crimes tribunal now under consideration. According to US officials, the resolution is likely to include:

■ The creation of the tribunal under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. The US says this move is unprecedented for a multilateral document because normally member countries would separately ratify the document as a treaty. By using Chapter 7, the UN puts the full weight of the members of the Council behind the resolution's enforcement, the gathering of evidence, and the carrying out of sentences. According to the US official, this strategy will ensure that all nations abide by the tribunal. Serbian lawyers in Belgrade argue any tribunal should be created by treaty.

'It is time for these international legal organizations to have ... women.'
– US official

■ The speedy establishment of an independent prosecutor's office and a separate trial and appellate court. The US considers it critical that the UN quickly get the funds needed to set up this system.

According to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's estimate, this will cost $31.2 million for the first full year of operation. The US government says it intends to look at the budget more closely to see if that much is really needed. By Mr. Boutros-Ghali's estimate there will be a staff of 300 people; the US State Department is estimating a staff of at least 100 individuals. A staff of 1,000 handled the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals.

■ No "in absentia" proceedings. The defendants must be present to be tried. If the Serbs, for example, refuse to hand over alleged war criminals, there is not much the UN tribunal can do. But as a US official points out, "If they are not turned over, they are imprisoned in their own land." The UN might also maintain its sanctions against the former Yugoslavia until all the defendants are presented for trial. The individuals named in any indictment will also have the international stigma of being considered criminals until they are tried.

Once the court is funded, the UN will have 60 days to submit a roster of international judges who would then be voted on by the Council.

Although the tribunals will be funded for four years, it is possible the judges could begin work relatively soon since some defendants are currently being held in Bosnian jails.

It is expected the maximum penalty under the tribunal's rules will be life imprisonment. There will also be a provision to provide compensation to the victims by guilty parties.

The tribunal would be seated in The Hague. US officials expect the actual trials to be conducted closer to the crime scene on the theory that having the trials in the region would save money and act as a salve for the ravaged area.

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will be in their home districts, will be a crucial opportunity for personal contact with their congressmen and senators.

"People will probably write letters, but it's more powerful for constituents to talk to representatives face to face," Rother says.

By next week, the House of Representatives will likely have voted on Mr. Clinton's deficit-reduction bill, but constituents can still apply pressure at the next step in the bill process.

Before Sens. David Boren (D) of Oklahoma and John Danforth

Next week's congressional break will be a crucial opportunity for personal contact with lawmakers in their home districts.

(R) of Missouri put forth their deficit-reduction plan May 20, including a provision for capping entitlements and elimination of the energy tax, a bloc of conservative House Democrats had floated similar ideas. The Boren-Danforth plan, crucial because at best it deadlocks the Senate's tax-writing committee on Clinton's plan, has clouded the picture in the House for the White House proposal. House members are leery of voting for an energy tax the Senate may kill.

But even if the Boren-Danforth plan hasn't garnered mass, open support in Congress, activists for senior citizens want to make sure it never does. One challenge the lobby faces is semantic. A cry of "No caps on entitlements!" does not resonate, nor does such a technical phrase even register with most Americans.

"The tone is of people demanding government benefits without any personal responsibility," says Kurt Vorndran, lobbyist for the National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC). "With Social Security, people spent a lifetime paying in and earning the right to benefits. Same with Medicare. Same with veterans' benefits."

But, he admits, his point of view has lost the battle of terminology. Thus, the flood of "action alerts" emanating from Washington to older activists around the country. NCSC last week sent out "seniorgrams" to 5,000 clubs and activists with information about the Boren-Danforth plan. The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare is activating its 6 million members. The National Council on the Aging says it can reach 8 million to 9 million people.

Families USA, a group that supports programs for the elderly and the poor, has activated its computer network of 10,000 people, detailing the plan, calling on them to contact their congressmen and to pass the word along to at least five other people.

"The Boren-Danforth plan is an outrageous effort to give relief to the better-off (delaying tax-increases on the rich and on corporations, for example) by trimming benefits for the aged, the sick, and the poor," says Families USA's A.S.A.P. Action Alert.

The Boren-Danforth plan would reduce cost-of-living increases on Social Security benefits of more than $600 a month, a projected savings of $23 billion. The plan would also impose spending ceilings on welfare, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and veterans benefits.

The rationale for capping entitlements is that they are the fastest-growing part of a federal budget deep in deficit. But advocates for seniors say the sharp increase in government spending for programs like Medicare and Medicaid is the real problem and reform of the health-care system is what is needed.

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repeatedly refers to Ukraine as "temporarily lost territory."

"If Rutskoi replaces Yeltsin, he will swallow Ukraine in one day," predicts Chernovil. "He will find some Fifth Column in Ukraine – some collaborators – and they will help him."

Even among the more moderate ranks of the government, there are worries that the triumph of Serbian ultranationalists would encourage their counterparts in Russia.

Mindful of Western inaction in Yugoslavia, the Ukrainian official stresses that a replication of that conflict here would have even more frightening implications.

"If something happens here, on the territory of the independent states that were parties to the Soviet Union, that will be incomparable to what is happening in Yugoslavia," says Anton Buteiko, President Kravchuk's foreign policy adviser. "Here huge populations would be involved. Here we have nuclear weapons and lots of atomic power stations. The consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy are only a small sign of what might happen."

Svetlana Ostroyshenko, an ethnic Russian member of parliament from the Ukrainian port city of Odessa, also shares a fear that Yugoslavia could repeat itself on Ukrainian soil.

But she sees the source of that danger as the growth of extreme Ukrainian nationalist groups, who seek to persecute the 11 million Russians who make up one-fifth of the population. She pulls out recent hate mail from such groups. "Death to traitors," reads the letter from the self-described Ukrainian Nationalist Self-Defense Regiment.

Ms. Ostroyshenko insists that so far there are no tensions between nationalities in daily life. "We don't have a confrontation between Russians and Ukrainians here," agrees Chernovil, "apart from Crimea where the situation is different." In Crimea there is a relatively compact Russian-speaking population, while elsewhere the populations are more mixed, he says.

But while there is no evidence of the deep hatreds evident in Yugoslavia, there is a palpable discomfort among Russians here, especially in eastern Ukraine and the Crimea, where Russian concentrations are higher, but also in Kiev. Such issues as the use of the Ukrainian language offer a glimpse of the soil in which hatemongers might plant their seeds.

Natasha Romanova, a Russian art historian who has lived most of her life here, complains that she cannot send her daughter to a Russian-language school.

Anton Kryukov, a Russian journalist living here, also has a young daughter entering school. "For me, it is not problem," he responds. "If she lives in Ukraine, she should learn Ukrainian. If she needs to learn Russian, she can learn it from her parents."

The deepening economic crisis also poses a threat to ethnic harmony, some say. The Russian population tends to be more concentrated in areas dependent on heavy industry such as coal-mining. Such industries are most vulnerable to the process of economic reform, and one Western analyst here suggests that Ukraine's reluctance to cut off subsidies to state industry is because of its "fear of the ethnic consequences of bankruptcy."

It is already commonplace to hear Ukrainians blame Moscow for their economic troubles while Russians here make the opposite argument that cutting links with Russia is the problem.

Such discussions are only one reflection of creating an independent Ukrainian state after leaving it dominated for hundreds of years by the Russian Empire. Minor slights become major issues when they are amplified by a deep-set Ukrainian perception that Russians arrogantly treat them as errant "little brothers."

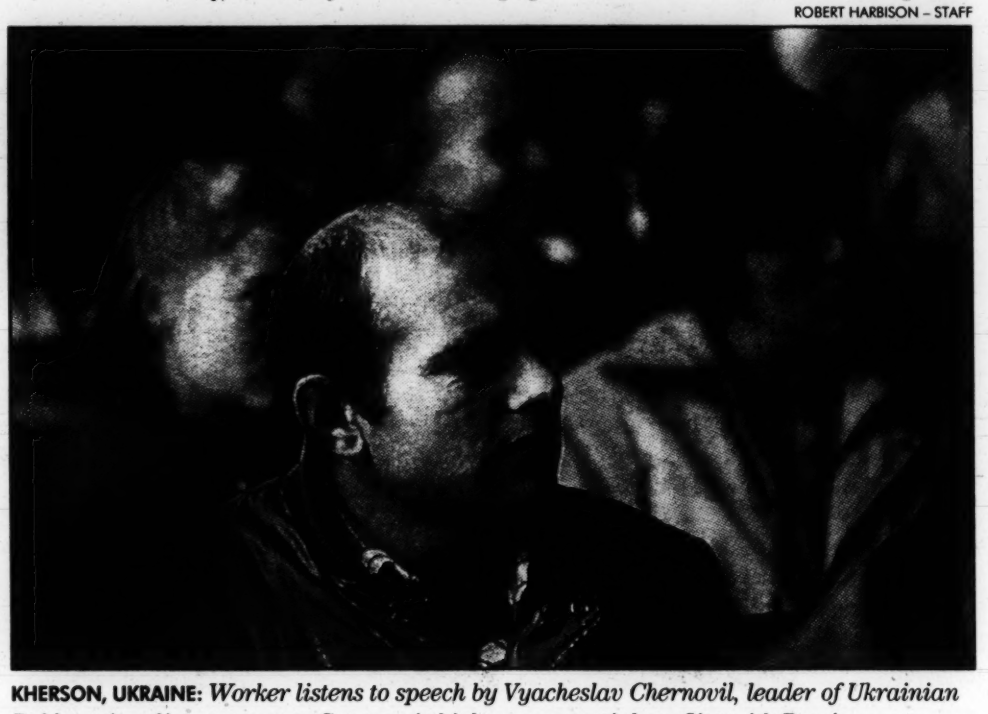
"They do have an inferiority complex," says Ian Brzezinski, a US security analyst with International Institute on Global and Regional Security here. "They feel uncertain over their own ability to secure their independence."

This colors Ukraine's relations with the West, and with the United States in particular. Ukrainians were stung by the August 1991 speech in Kiev by then President Bush in which he warned of the danger of "suicidal nationalism," a remark widely understood as a call not to break from the Soviet empire.

"Still in America, there are lots of politicians who regard Ukraine as a zone of strategic interests of Russia, as some sort of post-imperial space which still has some unity," Chernovil says.

Presidential adviser Buteiko accuses "certain Western countries" of having a "one-dimensional" policy toward Ukraine, focused entirely on the nuclear weapons issue. US pressure to get Ukraine to sign the START I nuclear arms reduction treaty and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) irritates many Ukrainian officials and politicians, who see it as a consequence of a Moscow-centered policy.

ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF



KHERSON, UKRAINE: *Worker listens to speech by Vyacheslav Chernovil, leader of Ukrainian Rukh nationalist movement. Concern is high over potential conflict with Russia.*

The perceived failure of the West to acknowledge Ukraine's sovereignty has led some here to advocate keeping nuclear weapons, at least for the next decade, as a way to keep the West's attention and to deter Russian imperial yearnings.

"If tomorrow, we get rid of the nuclear weapons, both America and Europe will forget about us," says Chernovil. "Russia will think twice whether it should cross the border if she knows nuclear weapons are stationed on our territory."

Ukrainian officials dismiss such talk and insist they are ready to fulfill their pledge to sign both START and the NPT and will push the parliament shortly to do so. But they are also seeking a formal treaty in which the nuclear powers, including Russia, will guarantee their security and the inviolability of Ukraine's frontiers. Ukrainian officials say they were reassured by the recent visit of US envoy Strobe Talbott that the Clinton administration is now taking Ukraine's needs seriously.

Nonetheless, Mr. Buteiko is eager to deliver a message that perhaps was missed until too late in the case of Yugoslavia. "Without Ukraine," he stresses, "stability in the eastern and central part of Europe, in Europe as a whole is impossible."

■ *Chrystyna Lapychak contributed to this article.*

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Cambodians Vote In Droves Despite Threats of Violence

By Kathy Chenault
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

SCATTERED violence by Khmer Rouge guerrillas has disrupted balloting at some polling sites and killed at least one person May 24, but heavy voter turnout indicates Cambodia is headed for its first internationally accepted election in decades. The head of the United Nations mission here has said the election has been fair and scandal-free.

Voting began May 23 and will continue through May 28. In the opening days, Cambodians thronged to election stations under heavy security by UN forces. By the end of the first day, 3.3 million – 70 percent of those registered – had cast their ballots. Voters have included hundreds of members of the Khmer Rouge, despite their earlier threats to disrupt the polling process.

"I think we are now going to have a democracy, and this is something we want very much," said Mark Polrith, who works as a legal adviser at the Justice Ministry.

He refused to say which of the 20 parties vying for 120 seats in the new constituent assembly he supported. But he said he thought most Cambodians wanted a change after 14 years under the Communist government installed by Hanoi in 1979, when the Vietnamese invaded to oust the radical Khmer Rouge.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk called for the Khmer Rouge to end its attacks and attempts to thwart the voting, saying the elections will be meaningless if the nation continues to be ravaged by fighting. "The elections must ... not just implement democracy, but save Cambodia," he told thousands of people gathered outside the Royal Palace.

THE former Cambodian monarch is widely regarded as the only leader capable of pulling together the various factions to achieve national reconciliation. After distancing himself during the campaign, he returned to Cambodia on the eve of the elections and expressed support for the voting.

Officials with the 22,000-member UN force trying to implement a UN-brokered peace plan for Cambodia downplayed the violent incidents that marred the first two days of voting.

Electoral workers were barred from talking with journalists at polling sites, and only sketchy information was provided publicly on election-related violence.

Top UN officials expressed concern that attention on hostile incidents could raise questions about the election's credibility and further unravel the UN-brokered peace accord already damaged by failed attempts to disarm the combatants, political violence linked to government forces, and the Khmer Rouge boycott of elections.

The Khmer Rouge, which imposed brutal agrarian reforms during its authoritarian rule in the late 1970s that killed more than 1 million people, joined three other warring Cambodian factions in signing the peace accord in 1991. But the guerrilla group has since withdrawn from the settlement, saying it is setting up Cambodia for future domination by Vietnam.

The UN's stakes in Cambodia are high, with the mission expected to cost more than $2 billion. The UN operations in Cambodia represent the organization's most ambitious peacekeeping effort in its history.

Some of those who waited a day to vote said they had been concerned about possible violence, but decided to go to the polls after the first day of balloting concluded with only a few violent incidents reported.

The largest attack linked to the elections so far occurred May 23 in the southern province of Kampot.

UN officials reported an artillery shell fell near a polling site there early in the morning, causing election officials to close three stations in the area. About 100 Khmer Rouge guerrillas then stormed one of the polling sites, firing at a ballot box and taking control of the building for a short time, a UN official confirmed privately.

No injuries were reported. The attackers stole a vehicle and a radio before fleeing.

NATIONAL

US Redirects Africa Policy

Clinton team promises more attention and aid – but not for dictators

By Ben Barber
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

JUST before President Clinton's inauguration, an African ambassador with many years of experience in Washington commented, "We have never seen this kind of thing. Under Reagan and Bush we felt completely left out of things. But these Clinton people, they know about Africa and are including us in things. It is very exciting."

Then he dashed off to a meeting with Mike Espy, the newly appointed secretary of agriculture.

Four months later, the Clinton administration has begun to live up to the ambassador's expectations by putting a higher priority than its predecessors on US foreign policy toward the 51 nations and 800 million people of Africa.

Under a blueprint unveiled last week by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the days when the US supported dictators in Liberia, Zaire, Sudan, and a half a dozen other countries is over.

Africa's future lies "not with corrupt dictators like Mobutu [of Zaire] but with courageous democrats in every part of the continent," Mr. Christopher told the African-American Institute. "At the heart of our new policy is an enduring commitment to democracy and human rights...."

As if to underline the secretary's words, on May 19 President Clinton recognized the formerly Marxist government of Angola. In the process, the US turned a cold shoulder to rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, who had received support from Presidents Reagan and Bush but has been criticized recently for refusing to abide by a peace settlement and election.

Another sign of the new US policy: Clinton refused to meet with Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Babangida when the Nigerian military leader visited Washington recently. Christopher said that Clinton has invited the "first president of a democratic Namibia, Sam Nujoma, as the first African head of state to be recognized at his White House."

While eschewing African dictators, the administration has pledged itself to helping to rebuild the continent. Christopher promised to keep development aid for Africa at $800 million for the coming year and to work with other creditor nations to reduce debt for countries "cooperating with IMF [International Monetary Fund] adjustment programs."

Christopher also said that the US would spend $70 million this year to protect Africa's environment, and has already spent $1 billion to fight drought this year.

The administration's approach has drawn praise from many quarters. After Christopher's speech last week, Nigerian Ambassador Zubair Mahmud Kazaure said, "I am very satisfied. He spoke of democracy, regional conflicts, the environment, human rights, and population control – all issues that are shared by the people of Nigeria."

REP. Harry Johnston (D) of Florida, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Africa subcommittee, also praised the new policy, calling it "a significant departure from the Africa policy of previous administrations."

But other analysts are more cautious. They note that Africa's deep-rooted poverty, illiteracy, ethnic diversity, corruption, and troubled history with Western nations make US goals there hard to achieve. Haunting the Africa debate is the vast human suffering in Somalia, Liberia, Angola, and Zaire, where the collapse of dictators has led to chaotic power struggles, famine, and war.

Another obstacle, many say, is decades of misdirected US efforts. The biggest recipients of US foreign aid were dictatorships that "are all basket cases now – Liberia, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Zaire," said research associate Janet Fleischman of the human rights group Africa Watch.

"The important questions are what to do about the remaining cold-war autocrats, where we backed the wrong people such as Mobutu [in Zaire] and Moi [in Kenya]," says Randall Robinson, executive director of the Washington-based activist group TransAfrica. "And what to do in support of countries that on their own volition implemented democratic reforms."

Mr. Robinson's solution sounds similar to the administration's policy: "We should support the [democratic] process – that means civic associations, involvement at the table of women, economic development at the local level," and other steps, he says.

But he raises a cautionary flag: "The administration says it supports these but let's see it."

The newly confirmed assistant secretary of state for African affairs, George Moose, contends that the administration will live up to its lofty goals.

In a speech to the African American Institute, he pledged to avoid a pitfall of previous administrations – giving money directly to corrupt rulers – by funneling American aid through nongovernmental organizations that assist in democracy-building.

But he also pledged that aid to the poor for "basic human needs" would not be cut off "even when we disagree fundamentally" with a regime's direction.

BETTY PRESS/FILE

OPERATION RESTORE HOPE: *US Marine in Magadishu, Somalia. Though the US promises more aid to Africa, critics note that many of the continent's problems, such as poverty, are deep-rooted and that past US aid efforts may actually have made the situation worse.*

Employment prospects for America's youths, especially minorities, are the worst in years

Out of School, Out of Work

By Amy Kaslow
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

SUMMER is the traditional time when teenagers and young adults find temporary work or embark on a career.

But with the season's start just weeks away, the job outlook is bleak for American youth. Their prospects of finding gainful employment during the next few months, much less over the longer term, are worse today than at the beginning of the recession three years ago.

Government statistics reveal that more than 1 in 3 teenagers is unemployed, has given up the job search or is underemployed – working part-time despite efforts to secure a full-time position.

And while the nation's "official unemployment rate" (defined as those who have no work at all, and are actively seeking work and fail to find it) is a nagging 7 percent, it is three times worse among 16- to 19-year-olds. For young people ages 20 to 24, the rate is 50 percent higher than the national average.

Harvard economist Richard Freeman, who has conducted extensive research on the subject, draws strong links between low wages, lack of work, hopelessness, and crime. "We can't continue over a long period with a substantial portion of our youth not making it," he says.

The problem is vexing to Mr. Freeman and other labor economists as well as to advocates and politicians who see its scope becoming larger and more complex. They warn of high social and economic costs related to an increasing number of young Americans out of work.

Freeman is concerned about the ongoing trend in which jobs are tough to find, and the pay is generally poor. "This is the worst year for college graduates, but less-educated youth are taking a much tougher beating."

ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF/FILE

YOUTHS AT LAFAYETTE PARK, WASHINGTON: *Experts say that teen unemployment has a high social cost: In the short term, it contributes to crime, and in the long term, it slows economic growth.*

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

'It is difficult ... to convince young people that there is payoff for doing well or remaining in school.'

– Alan Zuckerman

Drag on economic growth

For the latter group, he says, "it's a disaster out there," and adds that this is one of the factors that could be a drag on United States economic growth over the long term. "People get their skills when they are young. If they don't get on a good track early, they may recover some gains later on, but it's still a big negative."

Today's youth face the same challenges present during the Great Depression, he says. "Back then, people entering the job market never caught up – they were years behind the normal rate of progression."

By contrast, Freeman says, those who entered the work force in the middle of World War II saw "their lifetime trajectory of earnings go up fast."

Clearly such opportunity has faded. "The labor force participation rate for young people is very low," says Janet Norwood, former commissioner of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), who is now studying the problem as a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. "That's very worrisome," she says, "It's a real social problem."

According to BLS data, three times as many white American youths are out of work than are minority youths, but as a percentage of population, official unemployment among American black teens is approaching a staggering 50 percent.

The impact is particularly acute in urban areas across the US. City officials from Los Angeles to Baltimore are grappling with increasing numbers of idle youth who view crime and gang memberships – rather than a job after school – as their rite of passage to adulthood.

During the next several weeks, as millions of graduates pour out of high schools and colleges across the nation, the problem will be compounded, warns Alan Zuckerman, executive director of the National Youth Employment Coalition, a Washington-based advocacy group.

The coalition represents 50 job-training programs that span the country, including the Urban League, Boston's Jobs for Youth, Chicago's Alternative School Network, and San Francisco's New Ways to Work.

"It used to be that kids always learned a new job alongside their fathers, their uncles, or their grandfathers," says Mr. Zuckerman, who laments that employment opportunities have narrowed for all generations.

"When young people look around and see no one working," Zuckerman says, "many reach the conclusion that they don't have a chance of getting a job which will support them. It is difficult for family, friends, or teachers to convince young people that there is payoff for doing well or remaining in school."

High school dropouts are part and product of deteriorating social conditions, he says.

Improving job quality

Labor Secretary Robert Reich, one of the chief architects of President Clinton's embattled economic plan and all-but-dead jobs bill, says, "We do need to get back on track, but we need to improve the track. We need to improve the quality of jobs."

Mr. Reich, who likes to say that 95 percent of policymaking is the definition of the problem, asserts that for the employed, "75 percent of American workers are on a downward escalator in terms of earnings."

This development afflicts the unskilled or minimally trained workers the most, he says, because they are "competing with millions of people around the world eager to compete with American workers at a fraction of the prevailing wage."

He conceded that "there are very few alternatives to college that will lead to a good job."

Zuckerman and other advocates are pressing the Clinton administration to help fund training, promote business development and job creation, and restore the hope that American youth once took for granted.

■ *Part 1 of 3. Parts 2 and 3 will explore existing programs and prescriptions for change.*

Questions Arise Over FBI Role In 'Travelgate'

'TRAVELGATE," it seems, just won't go away.

The flap over the firing of the seven employees who worked in the White House travel office has now taken a new turn: The administration is being accused of improperly using the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to provide political cover for the firing.

White House officials on May 24 acknowledged taking the highly unusual step of summoning an FBI official last week and asking him to issue a news release saying criminal investigation of the seven workers was warranted. White House officials helped prepare the statement.

Attorney General Janet Reno, according to The Washington Post, was said to be angered that the FBI was brought into the case without her knowledge, in violation of an administration policy designed to shield the bureau from politics. Traditionally, the FBI does not comment on matters under investigation.

On May 24, White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said that in this case "we wanted to make sure that the facts were clarified" on allegations of financial mismanagement by officials of the travel office.

But Senate minority leader Bob Dole (R) of Kansas said it appeared to be an abuse of prosecutorial power, and he demanded an explanation from Ms. Reno and FBI Director William Sessions. "This latest 'guilt by press release' caper would make members of the old Soviet KGB swell with pride," Mr. Dole said in a Senate speech.

More bad news for Clinton

As if President Clinton didn't have trouble enough, his poll ratings are plunging.

An ABC News poll of 1,005 adults May 24 showed that only 46 percent approved Clinton's handling of his job, while 48 percent disapproved. Only a month ago, the president enjoyed a 59 percent approval rating against 39 percent disapproval.

Support for the president's economic program, which includes a new energy tax, also faded. In a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll taken over the weekend of 1,023 adults, some 44 percent approve of it and 45 percent disapprove, compared with 55 percent in favor and 39 percent against in late April.

Clinton has been getting lower approval ratings than any presidential predecessor at the same point in his term.

– Compiled by Max Boot

ECONOMY

Analysts Review Microsoft's New Operating System

Windows NT, a basic software for computers, faces stiff competition

By Laurent Belsie
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

PITTSBURGH

NEVER before has a software program generated so much attention and so much hype. The computer industry has waited months for this: a next-generation operating system called Windows NT.

Finally, this week Microsoft Corporation launched it.

"It's probably the most popular operating system that never shipped," says Rikki Kirzner, principal analyst with Dataquest Inc.

Windows NT is an operating system – the basic software that controls the computer. It is considered next-generation because it handles new, more powerful 32-bit application software and allows the computer's microprocessor to handle several operations at once.

In introducing the product on Monday, Microsoft's co-founder and chairman, William Gates, called NT "a fundamental change" in business computing.

R. NORMAN MATHENY – STAFF

BILL GATES: *Microsoft's chairman hopes Windows NT will lead to a fundamental change in business computing.*

Analysts are not quite so confident. They say NT is an important first step toward fundamental change. What is clear is that Microsoft has targeted an extremely strategic market. Whoever hits it just right could send shock waves through the entire industry.

"The threat of NT and the promise of NT has already galvanized the players" in the industry, says John Donovan, director of business groupware services at WorkGroup Technologies Inc., a market-research firm.

The computer industry is unsettled right now. On one side, millions of desktop users are moving up to faster and more powerful machines. On the other side, corporations are downsizing from large mainframe and minicomputers to networks of personal computers.

Where these forces collide is a middle ground called client-server. Under this architecture, desktop machines and high-end computers both play a role. The desktops are clients, linked up via networks. The networks are managed by powerful computers called servers.

If Microsoft can take over the server end as it dominates the client end of the market, it will be superbly positioned for the next generation of computing.

After all, computer users of all stripes eventually will need to move to a new operating system. The current one for desktops – DOS, in most cases – is more than 10 years old and showing its age. Businesses want an operating system software that will allow their servers to connect to various kinds of computers, not just the common personal computer.

"Windows NT does not break any new ground for the industry," says Bruce Lupatkin, managing director of technology research for Hambrecht & Quist. But "it breaks ground for Microsoft. Someone with Microsoft's presence can rally people around."

Microsoft has targeted an extremely strategic market. Whoever hits it right could send shock waves through the industry.

When Microsoft launched the product, it also announced that 24 personal computer manufacturers planned to ship machines based on Windows NT. These companies are not just traditional PC makers. They are non-PC manufacturers like Digital Equipment Corporation. That is a key advantage for NT: It will run on hardware that is not based on Intel Corporation's microprocessors.

"It's an extremely big deal," Ms. Kirzner says. Windows NT will be able to link up multiple platforms while its main competitor – Unix – has not.

Unix provides the biggest challenge to NT, analysts agree. Since NT is so new, they say, it will take at least 18 months before the product takes off. Corporations may decide instead to go with Unix.

Windows NT "is a bright child of good parents, and it will grow up," says Mr. Donovan of WorkGroup Technologies. "But right now, we are not going to give it a driver's license."

Unix software companies have moved to counter the Microsoft threat. After years of bickering, they announced earlier this year that they would support a common version of the software.

Other operating systems could also pose a threat to NT. IBM has had its competing product, OS/2, on the market for more than a year and just upgraded it last week. But it so far has not set the industry on fire.

Novell Inc., which dominates desktop networking software, has a competing DOS product and is acquiring a Unix company as well.

IBM has also teamed up with Apple Computer Inc. to develop a new operating system built around a technology called object-oriented programming.

It may be that NT flops but that other Microsoft products pick up the slack. Microsoft is developing an object-oriented operating system, code-named Cairo, that could be a winner. Or the already popular graphical user interface, Windows 3.1, could eventually develop into a full-blown operating system.

In any one of these ways, Microsoft has the potential to continue to dominate the market.

"It's a little like Baskin Robbins," Mr. Lupatkin says. "It's all ice cream, but which flavor do you like?"

Egypt Tries to Revive Ailing Cotton Market

By Sarah Gauch
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

CAIRO

EGYPTIAN cotton is world-renowned for its long fibers, fineness, homogeneity, and strength. But nationalization policies begun in the 1960s initiated a steady drop in cotton production and export.

Today an aggressive program is underway to liberalize Egypt's cotton and return it to its former glory. The government has freed the price of cotton in stages over the last three years. Producers are no longer required to plant this crop, nor must they sell all their produce to the government for a set rate, as before.

The government plans to liberalize cotton trading and processing companies. Some private traders already have licenses. The government has also begun advertising processing facilities for lease. More than 25 years after it was closed, the cotton market of Mina El-Bassal, west of Alexandria, is scheduled to reopen this fall. But laws to facilitate the reopening must be enacted.

Cotton farmers optimistic

Cotton experts and government officials hope these policies will lift the cotton sector from the doldrums. "The vehicles of a free market will work if the government stays away from production and trading and just gives technical support and advice," says Kamal Nasser, managing director for the Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit.

Farmers agree. "I'm optimistic about Egypt's cotton, because it's going to be free," says Amrullah N. Baligh, a major cotton farmer.

In 1961, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser placed cotton under government control. Officials determined how much cotton farmers would plant, what varieties they would grow, and where they would plant them. Producers sold all their produce to the government at 40 percent of the international price.

As a result of these and subsequent policies over the years, Egypt's cotton production fell by nearly a half, from a high of nearly 11 million kentars [1 ton equals 18.18 kentars] of lint in 1969-70 to a low of 6 million kentars in 1990-91. Exports dropped even more dramatically, from 6.5 million kentars of lint in 1969-70 to 300,000 kentars in 1991-92.

Poor management

The quality of Egypt's cotton remains superb, but one cotton expert says this is despite the government's policies, not because of them. "The state of Egypt's cotton is a miracle.... Our cotton is the best in the world up to this moment in spite of what has been done to it in the last 30 years," says cotton expert Galal El-Rifai.

Nationalization made cotton unprofitable for farmers. They ignored government regulations and planted more-lucrative crops or delayed planting of cotton in order to earn more from previous harvests. Cotton's quality also decreased slightly because farmers ignored new technology. They used dated irrigation systems, neglected to store and package cotton well, and carelessly applied pesticides and insecticides.

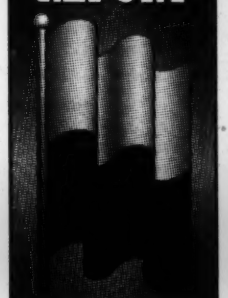
As production fell, the government erroneously assumed in the late 1980s that Egypt's high-quality cottons would capture a higher price. Inadequate supplies of Egyptian cotton on the world market caused customers to switch to other varieties.

The government began importing lower-quality cotton for its local mills so the better cotton could be exported. But so far the scheme has been largely unsuccessful. With domestic demand increasing and the government limiting cotton imports, the nation's use of high-quality cotton has not substantially declined. Nor has Egypt been able to increase exports.

Although government officials and cotton experts alike agree the answer to Egypt's cotton problems is liberalization, the process will not be easy. Cairo is trying to free this market during a global economic slump. World cotton prices fell 20 percent last year.

"The government is serious about liberalization, I think, but something could happen to cause them to backslide, i.e. if farmers abandon ship and stop producing cotton," a western economist adds.

SPECIAL REPORT



POLAND TURNS THE CORNER

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■ The private sector: Entrepreneurism unbound **13**

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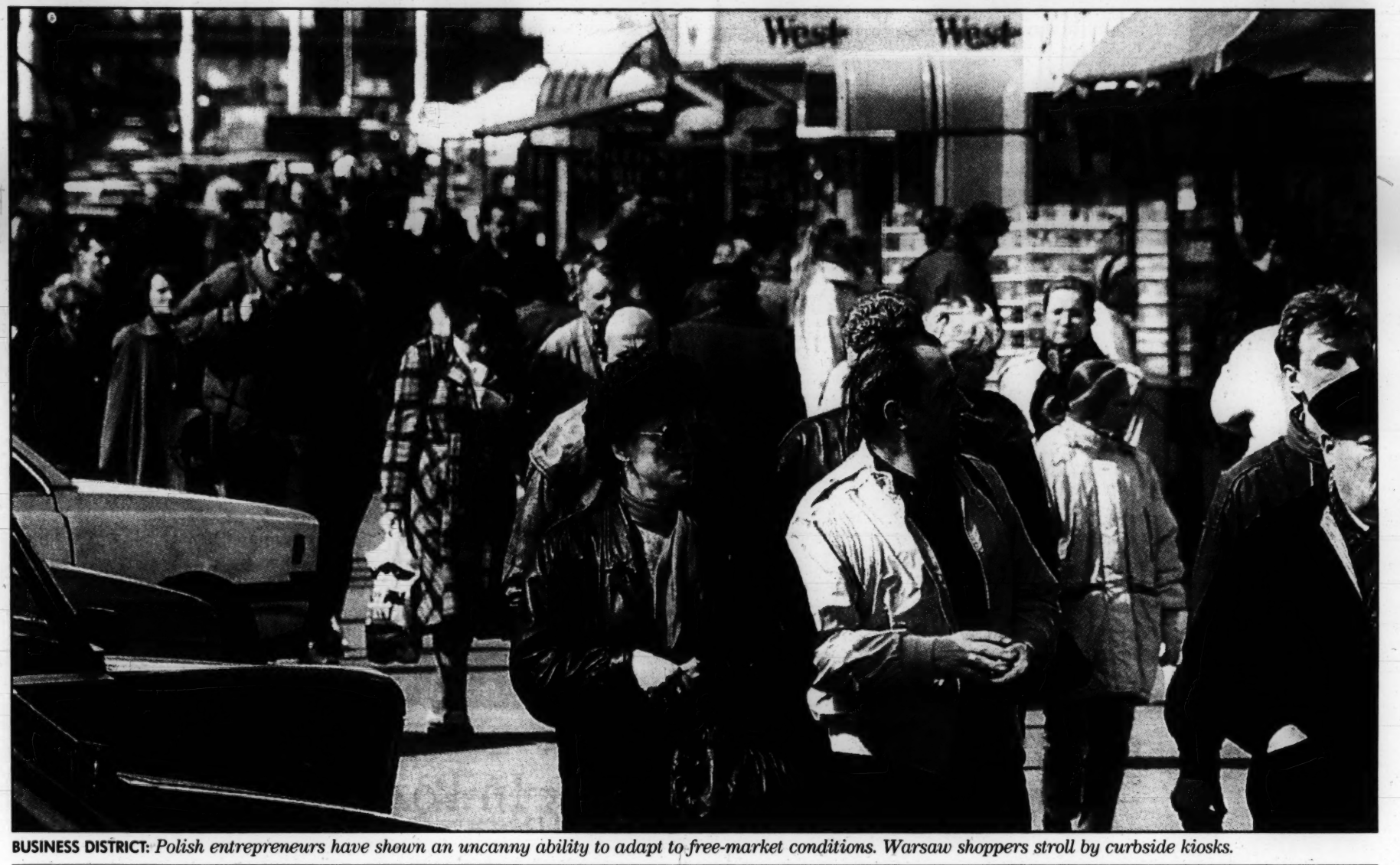


BUSINESS DISTRICT: *Polish entrepreneurs have shown an uncanny ability to adapt to free-market conditions. Warsaw shoppers stroll by curbside kiosks.*

Poles Try the Free Market, and It Fits

But perils persist: Economic growth has been uneven and the political situation remains 'delicate'

Stories by Francine S. Kiefer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Photos by Robert Harbison
Staff photographer of The Christian Science Monitor

WARSAW

CONSIDER the Polish potato chip.

Available in barbecue, bacon, or plain salted flavor, and packaged in a shiny red and yellow cellophane bag, it could easily be mistaken for a Western import.

The same could be said about the Polish television set, which contestants can win on Poland's own version of "Wheel of Fortune," the American game show. Sleek, compact, and equipped with remote control and stereo sound, it could be a Sony. But – surprise! – it's produced by Elemis, a state-owned company in Warsaw on its way to privatization.

Polish entrepreneurs – and even state-run businesses – have shown an uncanny ability to adjust quickly to free-market conditions and give consumers products they want. It's this flexibility, and the government's adherence to economic reforms, that make Poland the first country in Eastern Europe to emerge from severe post-communist recession.

Largely without the help of foreign investors, the Poles last year boosted industrial production by 4 percent (it plummeted 24 percent in 1990). Inflation is on a downward trend. Still high at a targeted 32 percent for this year, it is a lot better than three years ago, when it galloped along at nearly 600 percent.

The private sector, meanwhile, has advanced beyond the stage of sidewalk kiosks and hot dog stands, although there are still plenty of those. More than half of working Poles now have jobs in the private sector, a strong incentive for them to make sure capitalism succeeds.

As far as private enterprise goes, "this country is more advanced than any in the region," says Henryk Szlajfer of the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

But like everyday life in Poland, in which BMWs speed past fields still plowed by horses, the economic and political scene is a dichotomy of positive and negative trends.

Reformers trying to move the country forward are often undermined by those who yearn for the way things were.

As one longtime observer of the country remarks, "Poland is striding boldly forward on a banana peel."

Economic growth, for instance, is highly uneven. Blossoming cities like Warsaw, Poznan, and Krakow are blessed with unemployment rates of 5 percent to 9 percent, while agricultural regions and one-industry towns suffer jobless rates of 20 percent and higher. A severe housing shortage prevents movement of labor from depressed areas to prosperous ones.

The story of contrasts repeats itself in the political arena. For the first time since the demise of communism four years ago, Poland has enjoyed a small degree of political stability, personified in Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka (pronounced Su-HOTS-ka).

See **RECOVERY** *page 14*

Church's Popularity Dims With Advent of Democracy

WARSAW

ROMAN Catholicism, once the church triumphant in Poland, is now the church controversial.

Two years ago 70 percent of Poles approved of the Catholic Church. Now that figure is down to 40 percent – and this is the most Catholic country in the world. More and more Poles say the church is too conservative and exercises excessive influence on politics:

■ A new broadcast media law says radio and television broadcasts must "respect the Christian system of values" – a subtle form of censorship, commentators argue.

■ Another new statute, backed by the church, tightens access to abortion, changing the policy of abortion on demand brought in under communism.

■ The state is now funding the teaching of Catholicism in Polish public schools, support that some observers say blurs the line between church and state.

The church once enjoyed heroic status among Poles. Under communism, it was the only institution that retained a degree of autonomy, providing an alternative voice amid the cacophony of Marxist-Leninist propaganda.

During the Solidarity trade union protests and martial law of the 1980s, it became politically active, sheltering dissidents and helping to organize demonstrations and the underground press – a risky stance, as illustrated by the 1984 murder of the Rev. Jerzy Popieluszko by secret police agents. The church's political role was formalized when Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski turned to it as a bridge to Solidarity.

But in today's democracy, some Poles say the line dividing church and state is blurring. Others say they do not need the church to speak for them anymore. They can speak for themselves.

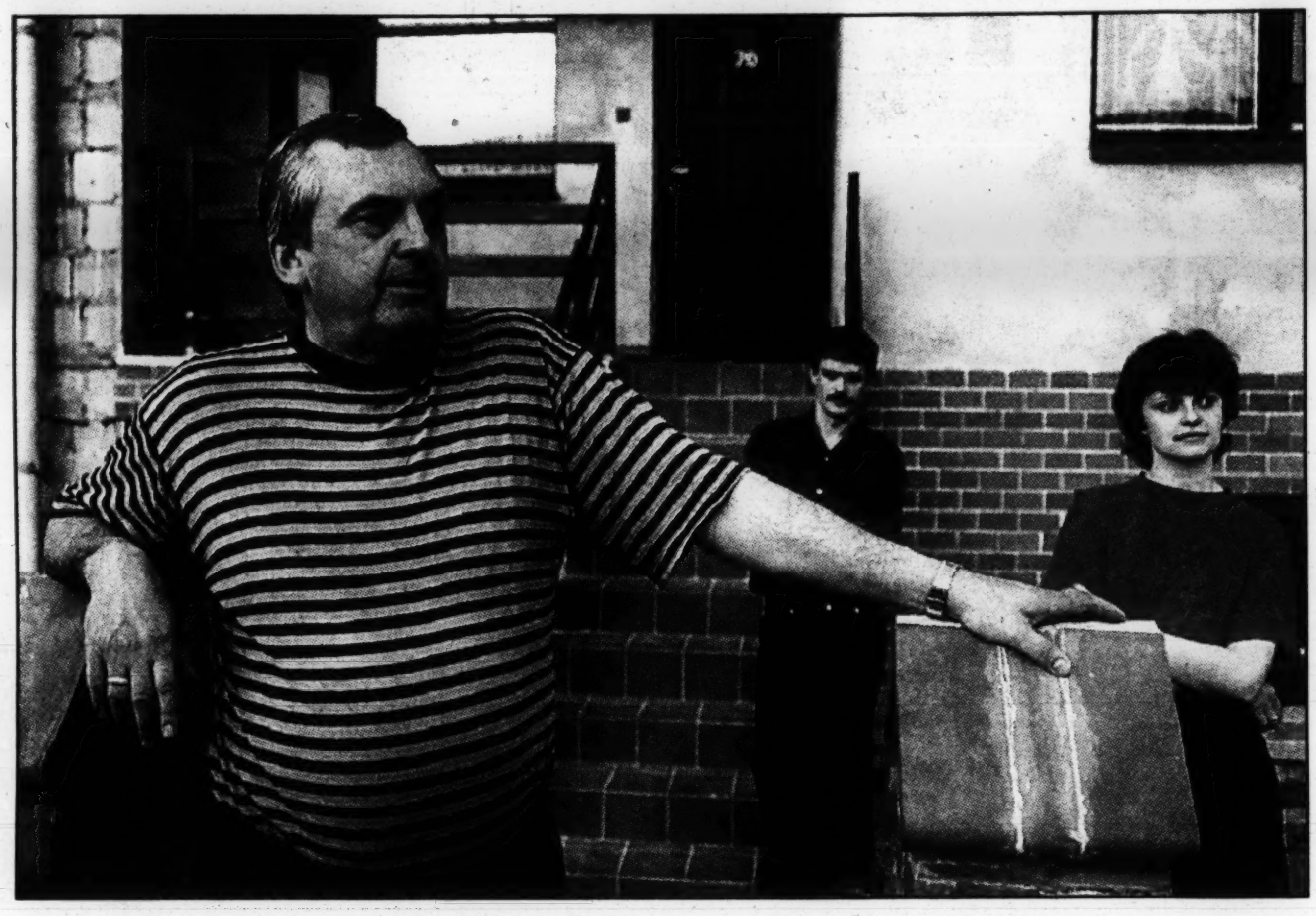
"The strong participation of the church [in politics] is dangerous both for the state and the church [because] the center of real power is transferred from the bodies that are controlled by the people to another body that can't be controlled," says Barbara Labuda, a member of the Sejm (parliament) who lobbied passionately against the anti-abortion bill and is one of the country's most popular figures.

Ms. Labuda describes the abortion law that emerged from the Sejm this year as "a secret agreement" between the Catholic episcopate in Poland and the National

See **CHURCH** *page 12*

SPECIAL REPORT

POLAND TURNS THE CORNER



ALL YOU NEED IS ... MONEY: *Andrzej Mroczoszek at his Poznan home with daughter Alina and son-in-law Marek Marcuewka. According to Mroczoszek, three things are necessary for success in today's Poland: money, money, and money.*

THE TWO POLAN

Prosperous Poland: In Poznan, a Bourgeoisie Flourishes

POZNAN, POLAND

THE road leading through the new housing complex and up to Andrzej Mroczoszek's town house is still an unpaved bumpy track. His modest two-door Peugeot hatchback is parked on a dirt patch before the front gate. Next door, amid building materials and bags of cement mix, his neighbors lounge in the sunshine on glistening white lawn furniture.

This is Poland's emerging middle class, found mostly in cities responding well to economic reforms, such as Warsaw, Krakow, and Poznan. Because of their diverse economic base and cultural importance, these cities make good breeding grounds for entrepreneurs.

DAVE HERRING – STAFF

But growth in Poland is highly uneven. Vast agricultural regions and one-industry towns suffer unemployment rates of nearly 20 percent and higher. In those areas people are worried about day-to-day existence, not lawn furniture. The country is increasingly divided into a Poland prospering under capitalism and a Poland still struggling to survive the post-communist recession. **(See map, below.)**

According to Mr. Mroczoszek (pronounced Mro-CHO-shek), you need only three things to make it in today's Poland: money, money, and money. "When I started to build this house in 1987, you needed a lot of friends and connections to get even a single thing. But after 1990, there was no problem getting what you needed. It's so much better now. If you have money, you just go to the store," he says with wonder.

By the looks of his three-story brick row house, Mroczoszek has money. Nearly every room is newly furnished: There is an ivory-colored leather sofa set in the fireplace nook; a sleek, black dining set; and a master bedroom set. The kitchen, paneled in pine, has a country look. The family's outlook, however, isn't entirely rosy; the house is also home to the Mroczoszeks' daughter and son-in-law, who aren't in a position to afford their own place.

Mroczoszek was able to buy his house through a combination of factors: cheap land offered to employees of the Polish railroad; a loan that he paid back before interest rates shot up in 1990; and his multiple jobs. Full-time, he works as an attorney for the railroad. Part-time, he contracts himself out to other companies.

Poznan is diverse enough for Mroczoszek to find markets for his services.

The 600,000 residents are said to be efficient and organized, a reputation developed in the 19th century when this region of Poland was occuppied by Prussians. At that time, the local Poles were determined to out-German the Germans by being better businessmen and better farmers.

Poznan almost feels like a German city. Its streets look to be the cleanest in Poland and tidy new stores line the sidewalks. Located on the Berlin-Moscow railway line, the city has grown into a significant trade center, hosting 23 trade fairs annually.

THE FAMILY GAJDZINSKI: *Barbara, Kay, and Witold (l. to r.) enjoy the view from the apartment. They own three cars, and one is just a hedge against inflation.*

Poznan is the fifth-largest city in Poland, but in terms of new business start-ups, it is second only to Warsaw, says local economist Jozef Orczyk. Its unemployment rate of 5 percent to 6 percent is one of the lowest in Poland, "and we've got more cars per capita than anywhere else," he says.

PERHAPS the proliferation of cars is due to people like Witold Gajdzinski and his wife Barbara, owners of three cars – a Volvo, a Renault, and a Citroën, the last purchased purely as a hedge against inflation. But over a dinner of homemade potato pancakes in their newly purchased apartment, the Gajdzinskis explain that they've benefited from the reforms not only in monetary ways.

"It's more than just the money," says Mrs. Gajdzinski, a translator of scientific texts. "I can organize my life now. It's easier. Everything is more accessible now and I see better prospects for my children," 9-year-old Kay and 3-year-old

For the first time, she ad a say at their childrens' sch ing with her Barbie doll in has started private piano les granted only to the most pr in communist times.

The family is keen to and as the dinner conversa the building's satellite dish ican television sitcom "Fam living room. Greater acces and books, even a friendlie the office, are all improvem Gajdzinski appreciates in

For her husband, de means he can be his own b ski manages warehouses th fiscated by the Nazis and fi his family after the fall of is making much better mon worked as a mechanical e work is more satisfying, h when I went to work, so interesting and sometimes Gajdzinski recalls. "Now, I to do and I have more fre a human being."

HE WO ANDS

SCENES OF LODZ: *Grazyna Rypalski (near left) stopped buying clothes for herself years ago, concentrating instead on the needs of her teenage son, Dominik (far left). Textile worker Irena Hebel (below) – a Solidarity member – says some of her friends were happier during communist days.*

nes

view from their newly bought flation.

nd 3-year-old Kevin.
time, she adds, parents have childrens' schools. Kay, play- arbie doll in the next room, vate piano lessons, a privilege the most promising students times.
is keen to perfect English, ner conversation rolls along, atellite dish beams the Amer- sitcom "Family Ties" into the reater access to information en a friendlier atmosphere at all improvements which Mrs. reciates in the new Poland. usband, democratic Poland e his own boss. Mr. Gajdzin- arehouses that were first con- Nazis and finally returned to r the fall of communism. He h better money than when he nechanical engineer and the satisfying, he says. "Before, to work, sometimes it was l sometimes it was boring," alls. "Now, I do what I want ve more free time. I feel like ."

But in Lodz, Poles Struggle as Reform Flounders

LODZ, POLAND

"WE curse Lech Walesa!" shouts Irena Hebel, trying to make herself heard above the racket of beating looms at the Dywilan carpet factory in Lodz.

Mrs. Hebel belongs to the Solidarity trade union, but the economic reforms introduced under the three-year-old presidency of Mr. Walesa, the father of Solidarity, do not agree with her one bit.

"It's wages," she says. They are not keeping up with the rising cost of housing, food, electricity, and heating. "I've got nothing left over at the end of the month," she complains.

And it's unemployment. Hebel counts herself lucky to have a job, but many of her friends don't. Lodz (pronounced Woodj) is a one-industry city, 60 percent dependent on textiles. The industry, however, has collapsed along with its former prime market, the Soviet Union.

In Lodz, unemployment has reached nearly 18 percent, making it one of the most depressed major cities in Poland. It is typical of many regions in Poland that have been left behind by economic recovery. Poles in these areas have had to watch while their countrymen have prospered in other, more economically adept cities.

"It's much, much worse than it was five years ago," says Hebel. "My friends think communism was better than what we've got now."

Lodz has seen strikes and demonstrations, including a march protesting hunger. Boguslaw Grabowski, governor of Lodz Province, predicts that social tension in the area will become more dangerous over the next years – even if the standard of living improves and there is an increase in industrial production (which has plunged 60 percent over the last three years).

"Revolution starts not when conditions are the worst, but when the gap between expectations and experience is the highest," he says.

For example, it used to be that people from Lodz who visited Warsaw could notice little difference between the two cities, Governor Grabowski explains.

"Now, there's more and more of a difference. In Warsaw, five or 10 new hotels have gone up, and not even one in Lodz," Grabowski continues. "People start thinking, 'Why? I live in the same country!' " The difference is made even more noticeable because wages in Lodz are about 17 percent below the average Polish wage of roughly $200 per month.

As a "depressed" area, Lodz qualifies for special financial assistance from the central government: funding for worker retraining, extended unemployment benefits, a three-year tax holiday for companies investing more than $1.6 million dollars, and generous depreciation schedules for businesses.

BUT somehow, this government assistance seems not to have touched the world of an unemployed department store worker named Grazyna Rypalski.

Her unemployment check runs out this month, two years after she was first laid off from her job as a middle manager at the Otex department store, now bankrupt. Her husband Janusz lost his job as an electrician and has bought a small booth from which he sells jeans and T-shirts in the Lodz market.

"I need to be very strong inside to live through all this, because one day he's got money and another day, he has none at all," Mrs. Rypalski says. When she has money, Rypalski says the first thing she does is buy food and freeze it for harder times ahead.

Rypalski recalls how, when she was desperate, she used to smuggle clothes in from Hungary and sell them in Poland.

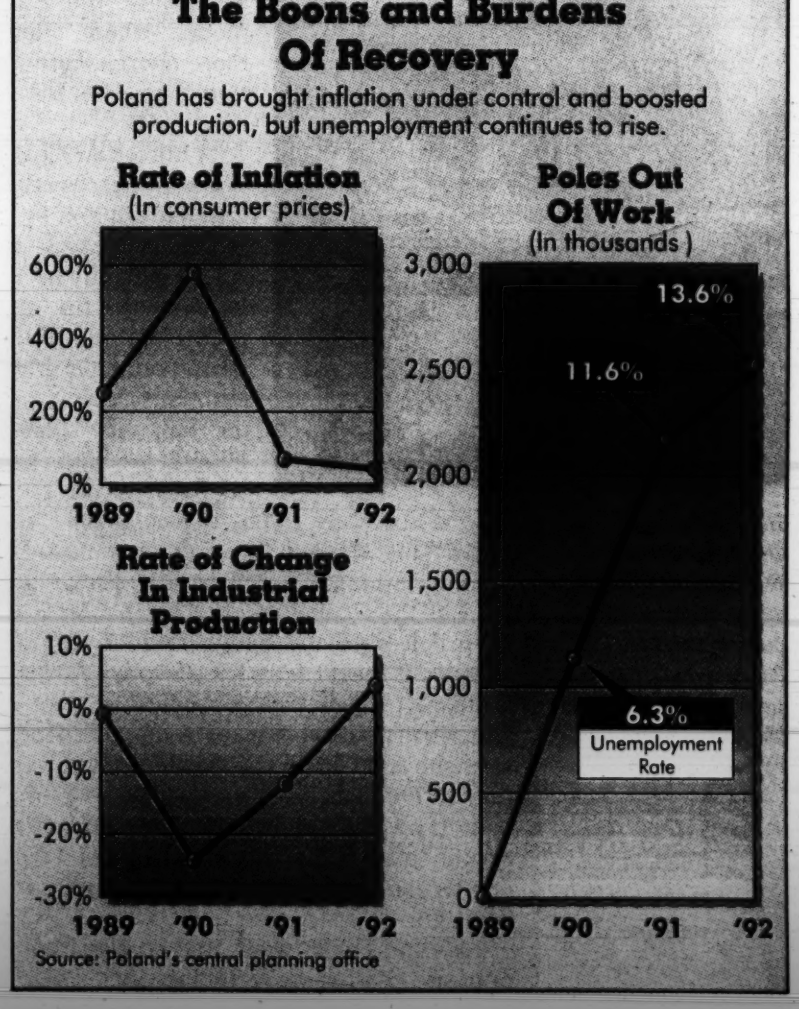
"I'm not ashamed of this," she says. "It was hard work." But it is no longer profitable.

Mrs. Rypalski and her husband stopped buying clothes for themselves long ago, concentrating instead on the needs of their 16-year-old son, Dominik, a fan of the late rock star Jim Morrison, a guitar player, and a poet. She draws a lot of support from her family, and remarks that others are worse off.

She tells of a family in her apartment house where both parents are jobless; they have three children. "Their kids are out on the street and ill-behaved. The 7-year-old boy has started stealing. They have nothing at home, and it is getting worse."

For all her problems, though, Rypalski can still manage a smile. She hopes for better days, and certainly does not want to turn back the clock to communism. "I felt like I was in a glass jar. I'm so happy the lies are over."

DAVE HERRING – STAFF



SPECIAL REPORT

POLAND TURNS THE CORNER

CHURCH from page 9

Christian Union, a partner in the multiparty coalition government that is often jokingly described as more Catholic than the church itself.

After the passage of the anti-abortion bill, Polish Primate Cardinal Jozef Glemp came to the Sejm to express his thanks. "The episcopate organizes lunches for the members of parliament," Labuda charges. "It gives them marks on how they're doing and tells them what to do."

A senior government official, however, argues that "if there were real annexation" of the government by the church, "certainly those coalition parties which objected would raise the issue." So far, he says, they haven't.

But at least one prominent person has. Tadeusz Zielinski, the parliament's appointed ombudsman on civil rights, recently warned that Poland is becoming what he calls a denominational state.

Mr. Zielinski went to the Constitutional Tribunal, the country's highest authority on constitutional issues, to challenge state funding for religion lessons in public schools and other issues. But last month the Tribunal upheld the most of the practices.

The Rev. Jan Sikorski of St. Joseph's Parish in Warsaw cannot understand the commotion.

Sitting upright in his black robe, he lifts his hands in the air in exasperation. "It's normal!" he exclaims. In a country that is 95 percent Catholic, he insists, it is normal that unborn life be protected, religion be taught in the schools, and Christian values be reflected in the media. He answers a question about media censorship with his own query: "When have Christian values ever been dangerous?"

In Krakow, the Rev. Jozef Tischner, a liberal priest, criticizes the church, saying it is "looking out for its own interests." The church is having "difficulty adjusting" to its less prominent, post-Communist role, he says.

ST. DOMINIQUE'S CHURCH, POZNAN: *The Catholic Church is losing popularity in post-communist Poland; one diplomat says the church 'is no longer the great resister.'*

"Everybody agrees on the separation of church and state [which is anchored in the Polish constitution] but there are different interpretations of what separation means," Fr. Tischner explains. He says it looks like Poland will follow the European model, which allows for more church-state interaction than does the American model.

A European diplomat in Warsaw agrees that the Catholic Church in Poland is confused about its new role. Suddenly, he says, it is no longer the great resister, and all the dissidents and underground institutions, which it had in its lap, are gone. The church, he said, is trying to hang on to its power "and desperately trying to win people as it did then." This, he said, "is its greatest mistake."

The Catholic Church here is always going to hold its core believers. But the harder it tries to keep Polish politics within its fold, the more resistance it meets from less-devoted Catholics.

Joanna Kurmanow, a medical student in Poznan, seems typical of many young Poles today. She says she used to go to church regularly, but now, only on the main religious holidays. "Before, when church was forbidden under the Communists, everyone went," Ms. Kurmanow says. "Now, the priests tell you to go to church, and so people don't go.

"It's the Polish way!" she laughs. "We do the opposite of what we're told to do."

PRIEST AND PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER: *The Rev. Grzegorz Kopytowski, whose religion course is popular because he encourages questions and 'doesn't just preach,' talks with a group of students after class.*

Catholicism in the Classroom

Saying 'only one way is shown,' students find choices limited

LODZ, POLAND

'LAST week, we talked about ascension into heaven," the Rev. Grzegorz Kopytowski is telling his class of 28 students. "Today, we're going to talk about the practical consequences of this."

Like almost every week, though, Fr. Kopytowski never gets the chance to finish his 45-minute lecture. Instead, the young priest is interrupted by a barrage of questions from his students.

"We ask him questions all the time. He can never finish his program," says Jakub Lechiewicz, an 18-year-old in the class. "This is a period in our lives when everything interests us" – even religion, says Mr. Lechiewicz, who sports a Humphrey Bogart T-shirt.

Kopytowski is not teaching Catholicism in a church building, but in a public school, just as it was done before World War II.

This return to tradition, however, is controversial.

Even though Poland is 95 percent Catholic, Tadeusz Zielinski, the parliament's appointed ombudsman for civil rights, believes some aspects of the religion classes violate the right to privacy as well as the separation of church and state. These aspects include the public financing of priests and lay teachers at school as well as the inclusion of religion on a student's general report card.

Mr. Zielinski recently took these and other issues to the Constitutional Tribunal, which rules on constitutional disputes. But in April the tribunal struck these two complaints down.

Iwona Fuks, another member of the class, is relieved that religion lessons are back in school. "It makes life easier for me. I don't have to go to special classes in a church. I have my friends here," she says. Besides, she smiles, "the priest is great! He's such a change. He doesn't just preach, he allows for questions."

Ms. Fuks, who says she attends church every Sunday and goes regularly to confession, says she is making spiritual progress because of Kopytowski's teaching.

The students say that it is the openness of this particular priest that has won their attention, although Lechiewicz adds that "most of the people who come to class are pressured by their parents."

When religion was reintroduced to Polish public schools in 1990, the law left it up to parents of grammar school students to decide whether their children should take the religion class or not. In high school, the decision is left up to the students. Officially, the law allows students to take classes in other religions or in ethics, but there frequently are no teachers available for these subjects.

SOME of the students in Kopytowski's class are frustrated by lack of religious choice. "Other religions should be taught in school," Lechiewicz criticizes. Because of the teacher's position as a priest, he adds, "he has to answer questions in a roundabout way." Lechiewicz says he's not getting what he's looking for, such as more about the Bible itself and "how it is that Jesus performed miracles."

"Only one way is shown to young people, and young people who don't want this way somehow are drop outs," says Grzegorz Cichosz, a class member who says he is at the point of deciding whether to break from the Catholic Church.

"I'm against hypocrisy. If I'm going to go to church, I want to believe," says Mr. Cichosz, who is one of the principal questioners in Kopytowski's class and opposes Catholicism being taught in school.

Cichosz, who says he prefers to pray in an empty church rather than go to Mass, describes himself as being on a search for spiritual truth. "But it's a very difficult time to be on that search, since everywhere in Poland, there is just one church." The lack of options, he concludes earnestly, "is my greatest obstacle in my search for faith."

Small Businesses Drive Private Enterprise Boom

POZNAN, POLAND

SHIRT sleeves rolled up, mobile phone in hand, and perspiring on this warm spring day, Tadeusz Gierak is out on the sidewalk, surveying his new gallery of shops in Poznan, an economically robust city in western Poland.

"Come on in!" he says with great enthusiasm, eager to show off his latest business venture to a foreign journalist.

Mr. Gierak has only one store front left to renovate, and that will soon be leased to a car dealership. His other commercial tenants have already moved in: a bookstore, a bathroom accessories shop, a store specializing in high-quality black-lacquered furniture, and a gift shop.

Gierak is exactly the kind of Pole who has helped build up private enterprise in this country with astonishing speed. Energetic, able to speak German (Germany is Poland's biggest trading partner), he saw gaps in the market and jumped to fill them.

Foreign firms set up some joint ventures, but the surge of private firms is primarily a home-grown affair.

His was the first sporting-goods store in Poznan, started with earnings from his years as a tennis professional in West Germany. He also supplies quality baked goods for half the city, and he's about to open a department store with the help of German investors. The beauty of it all, Gierak says proudly, is that "I never had to borrow." He reinvested his earnings and found a partner in Austria to go in on some of his projects.

Since economic reform began in 1989-90, Poland has experienced phenomenal growth in the private sector. Close to 60 percent of the labor force now works in private enterprise, churning out nearly half the country's gross domestic product. Though foreign companies have set up some significant joint ventures in Poland and invested $1.7 billion so far, the surge of private businesses is primarily a home-grown affair, involving mostly small- to medium-sized companies.

Private firms now conduct 90 percent of the retail business and more than 80 percent of foreign trade. An important weak spot, however, is industrial production, 70 percent of which is carried out by state-run companies.

Many Polish entrepreneurs got their start simply by driving to Berlin, buying goods there, driving back, and selling them to Poles hungry for Western products. "In that first stage, anyone who undertook anything was successful," says Stanislaw Deiksler, general director of W. Kruk, a leading private jeweler in Poland.

Polish private enterprise also flourished in an era of lax government regulation and weak customs control. "The law and the system are being enormously abused," Mr. Deiksler observes.

Many Polish small businesses operate on a mostly cash basis, to avoid a paper trail for tax collectors. Bogus papers are routinely presented at border controls, falsely identifying a van's contents or supplying non-existent addresses.

But the conditions for starting up new businesses now are less favorable. The government has stepped up enforcement, trying to close loopholes in the law or create regulations where none previously existed.

At the same time, "there are no more easy niches" left in the market, says Andrzej Wroblewski, editor of the banking journal Gazeta Bankowa. The lack of investment capital is one of the major challenges facing businesses today, Mr. Wroblewski adds. As the saying here goes, Poland is trying to introduce capitalism without any capital.

The problem lies in the country's lame banking system. It is burdened by heavy unpaid debts from state industries, and has discovered that lending to the federal government is more profitable than lending to industry. The end result is that banks' resources are being siphoned off to support the federal budget deficit – basically, the social safety net – rather than real economic growth.

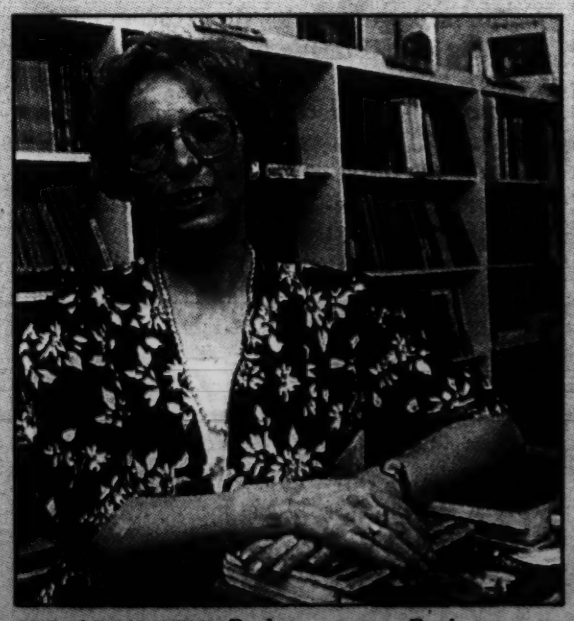
Also moving along slowly is the privatization of state industry. About 1,500 state enterprises have been privatized so far, and the Sejm (parliament) just passed a mass privatization law on April 30.

In the wings almost two years, the plan calls for the privatization of 600 state-owned companies through foreign-managed investment funds. Shares of the funds will be made available to the general public for a nominal fee, while pensioners and civil servants will receive shares for free.

Even with the plan, more than 6,000 enterprises remain in state hands. Through a new vehicle called the Enterprise Pact, managers and employees of these firms will decide how their concerns are to be privatized. This will be a key year, and probably a tumultuous one as well, for the privatization of state industry.

DOWNTOWN POZNAN: *Despite limited capital, Poland has experienced phenomenal growth in the private sector. Ninety percent of retail businesses are now in private hands.*

A Cautious Entrepreneur Succeeds in a Vibrant Private Sector



ONE BOOK AT A TIME: *Bookstore owner Barbara Majchrzak's measured approach is paying off.*

POZNAN, POLAND

BARBARA MAJCHRZAK is the cautious type.

While other Polish entrepreneurs were overextending themselves with credit – and getting caught when adjustable interest rates skyrocketed in 1990 – Ms. Majchrzak started her language school and foreign bookstore from savings and subsequent earnings.

"I could have bigger premises, lots of staff and secretaries ... but I fear I might have problems with cash flow," she says in an office that is barely big enough for a desk and chair. "My idea is doing things step by step."

That has proven to be a sound business philosophy, considering that, along with tremendous growth in the number of entrepreneurs, Poland has also experienced a significant amount of business failures.

Majchrzak, a teacher of English, founded Omnibus School of Languages for English and German in 1988. She was able to save on commercial rent by running evening classes in public school buildings.

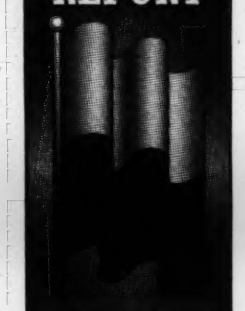
In 1991, she had enough earnings from her private school to finance Omnibus Bookshop, specializing in English and German language materials. She has since moved to a bigger store, also become a book wholesaler, and is about to open a second store in Szczecin, on the Baltic coast.

Majchrzak took several management courses organized by the British Know How Fund in Poznan. Omnibus has made a profit since the day it opened.

Still, she has her problems. At 40 percent, "taxes are really high," Majchrzak complains. And because her business relies on imports, it's sensitive to devaluations of the Polish zloty. Fortunately, the London publishers give her a break on prices.

"I feel sorry when we have to increase prices," she says. "Last year, when we had a sudden devaluation, we had to increase prices 12 percent. It immediately hit the pockets of our customers."

SPECIAL REPORT



POLAND TURNS THE CORNER

Poles Try On the Free Market, and It Fits

RECOVERY from page 9

Appointed last July, she enjoys the confidence of more than 75 percent of the population, according to opinion polls.

But her job is not easy. She's juggling a minority, multiparty coalition government and is up against a fractious Sejm (parliament) consisting of more than 20 parties. Still, Prime Minister Suchocka has been able to withstand two severe labor strikes, and by relying on compromise, has pushed through the Sejm a much-needed "small constitution" that defines the balance of power in government, an austerity budget, and a long-awaited mass privatization plan.

In a Monitor interview this month, Suchocka said that Poland has turned the corner, but described the overall situation as "very delicate." Populist pressure is being exerted on the government, she warned, and "one false move may make us roll back."

That "false move" may be the Solidarity trade union's push for a vote of no confidence in the government, set to be debated in the Sejm May 27. The union is demanding higher wages for teachers and health workers, but the government says there is simply no money in the budget for such increases.

Anything could happen in the Sejm. The prime minister could fall, be asked to lead a caretaker government until early elections are called, or survive the test. Although observers rule out a return to communist days, they warn that a new government could turn protectionist or pursue an inflationary monetary policy to meet higher wage demands.

Attacking budget cuts

The federal budget – set under an agreement with the International Monetary Fund – has been a favorite target for legislators. In April, the Sejm protected an increase in benefits for pensioners, undermining the budget. The farmer parties, meanwhile, are clamoring for minimum prices for agriculture goods. One recently quit the ruling coalition over the issue.

In Poland, however, "one has to make a distinction between daily events and the fundamentals," comments Ian Hume, director of the World Bank in Warsaw. Day-to-day politics is a very rough-and-tumble affair, but "the fundamentals are strong in Poland," Mr. Hume says with conviction. "The reforms are working."

Hume praises the Poles for "broadly maintaining" the painful macroeconomic reforms launched by then Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz in January 1990. These policies called for fiscal, monetary, and wage discipline, a task made slightly easier by the decision of the Paris Club of creditor nations to write off 50 percent of Poland's $32 billion debt.

The country is meanwhile introducing Western taxation methods, including a personal income tax and a value-added tax. Free trade, pricing, and market forces also have solid footing in Poland, with about 80 percent of the economy running on market prices.

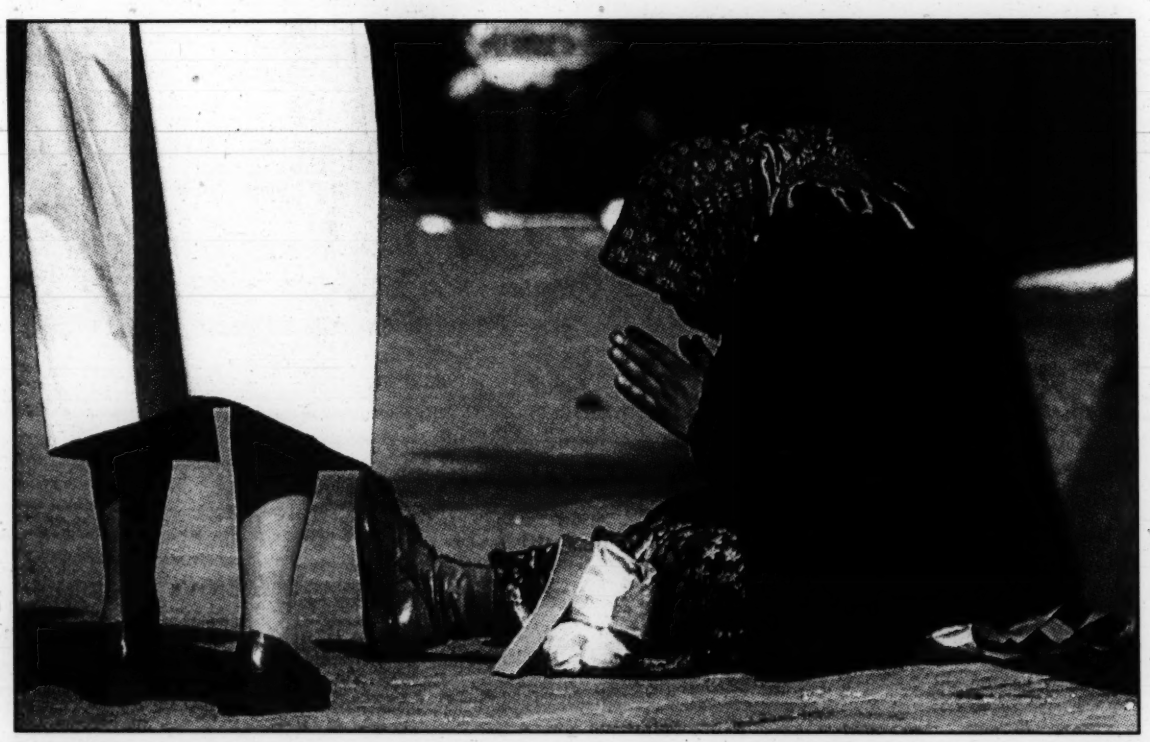
Although Warsaw dragged its feet in setting up a plan for mass privatization of state industry, other methods have enabled 1,500 state enterprises to be privatized since 1989. Including new business start-ups, the private sector accounts for nearly half of the country's gross domestic product, which grew by an estimated 0.5 percent to 2 percent last year.

A staggering number of state concerns, more than 6,000, remain to be privatized. But because much of the state sector appears to be restructuring, improving products, and redirecting exports westward, economists are not as discouraged about this as they could be.

Meanwhile, Poland has been able to reorient its trade so 80 percent now flows to Western Europe.

But all of this restructuring and reorientation has caused massive upheaval in Polish society. In March, 2.6 million Poles were unemployed (14.2 percent) and the forecast is for 3 million by year's end. According to an April poll by the CBOS Public Opinion Research Center, about one-third of Poles consider themselves near or below the poverty line.

The gap between rich and poor is still growing in Poland and wages are not keeping up with inflation. "It's very tough on people in the working ranks," Hume admits. Most observers expect more protests and strikes this year, although they do not believe it will come to violent unrest.



BYPASSED BY RECOVERY: *Although many Poles have profited from economic reforms, it is not uncommon to see destitute people on the streets. A woman appeals for money in Warsaw.*

'Little patience'

The prime minister sees hardship experienced by many Poles as the most likely threat to economic reform.

"People don't have enough patience and they still have this old way of thinking from the communist era, namely, that the state provides for social security and provides the right to employment," she says. "Certain parties are inspired by this old way of thinking and they want to play this card" by calling for early elections – which Suchocka says would be a diversion from economic reforms.

The Suchocka government has tried to address popular frustrations by concentrating the state's limited funds on especially depressed areas, setting up tax havens there, and allowing unemployment benefits to run longer in those regions. Medical care is still government-funded, although patients must partially pay for medicine. Meanwhile, the mass privatization plan is intended to share some of the assets left over from communist rule with the population.

Andrzej Wroblewski, editor of the banking journal Gazeta Bankowa, worries the government may go too far in trying to satisfy Poland's newly poor. The government, he warns, cannot afford to be a "good uncle" to everyone. "However cruel it may be, you must reward those who are pulling our economy ahead more than those who are pulling out."

EC Relations: Stormy, But No Longer Naive

WARSAW

POLAND is not happy with the way its integration with the European Community is proceeding.

Although associate EC status was granted to Poland in 1991, it has yet to be ratified by all the EC members.

The Poles are especially displeased over trade relations with the EC, since "the only chance for us is export-led growth," says Jan Bielecki, Poland's minister for European integration and a former prime minister. But with Western Europe in a recession, he says, "there is no mood now for free trade."

The atmosphere became stormy last November when the EC slapped punitive damages on Eastern European steel tubing, arguing it was being subsidized.

The latest dispute broke out in early April when the EC banned all dairy and meat imports from Eastern Europe, claiming they were a potential source of hoof-and-mouth disease. The disease had surfaced in Italy in a shipment from the former Soviet Union.

The Eastern Europeans, who said the disease had not been detected in their countries since the mid-1970s, retaliated by banning all EC dairy and meat imports.

"We learned we were simply naive" to believe in free trade, says Jerzy Kropiwnicki, Poland's minister of central planning.

The EC lifted the ban in early May, replacing it with new regulations. Poland has resumed some meat exports, but it has not yet lifted its ban on EC meat and dairy products.

IN an interview with the Monitor, Polish Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka said that Poles, who are now experiencing the pain that accompanies economic reform, need visible support from the EC.

"People need to see that it's worth it to live in a free country, that we can actually become a part of this bigger market and benefit from it," she said.

Accused of paying only lip-service to the idea of helping Eastern Europe, the European Commission this month adopted a substantial package of measures to hasten the integration of Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania into the EC.

The package includes the accelerated dismantling of EC tariffs on a broad range of Eastern European industrial and agricultural products. It also includes a commitment to eventual EC membership for these six former communist countries.

Several EC members, however, fear competition from Eastern Europe and are not keen on the package.

It is unclear whether the plan will receive the necessary support at the EC summit in Copenhagen in June.

Political posturing in both halves of Europe is obvious. With Eastern European products accounting for only 3 percent of EC imports, and with the EC enjoying a trade surplus with the East, it is not as threatened by the East as its members imply.

Conversely, the Poles are indeed penetrating the Western market, with 60 percent of their exports going to the EC, and 18 percent to other West European countries.

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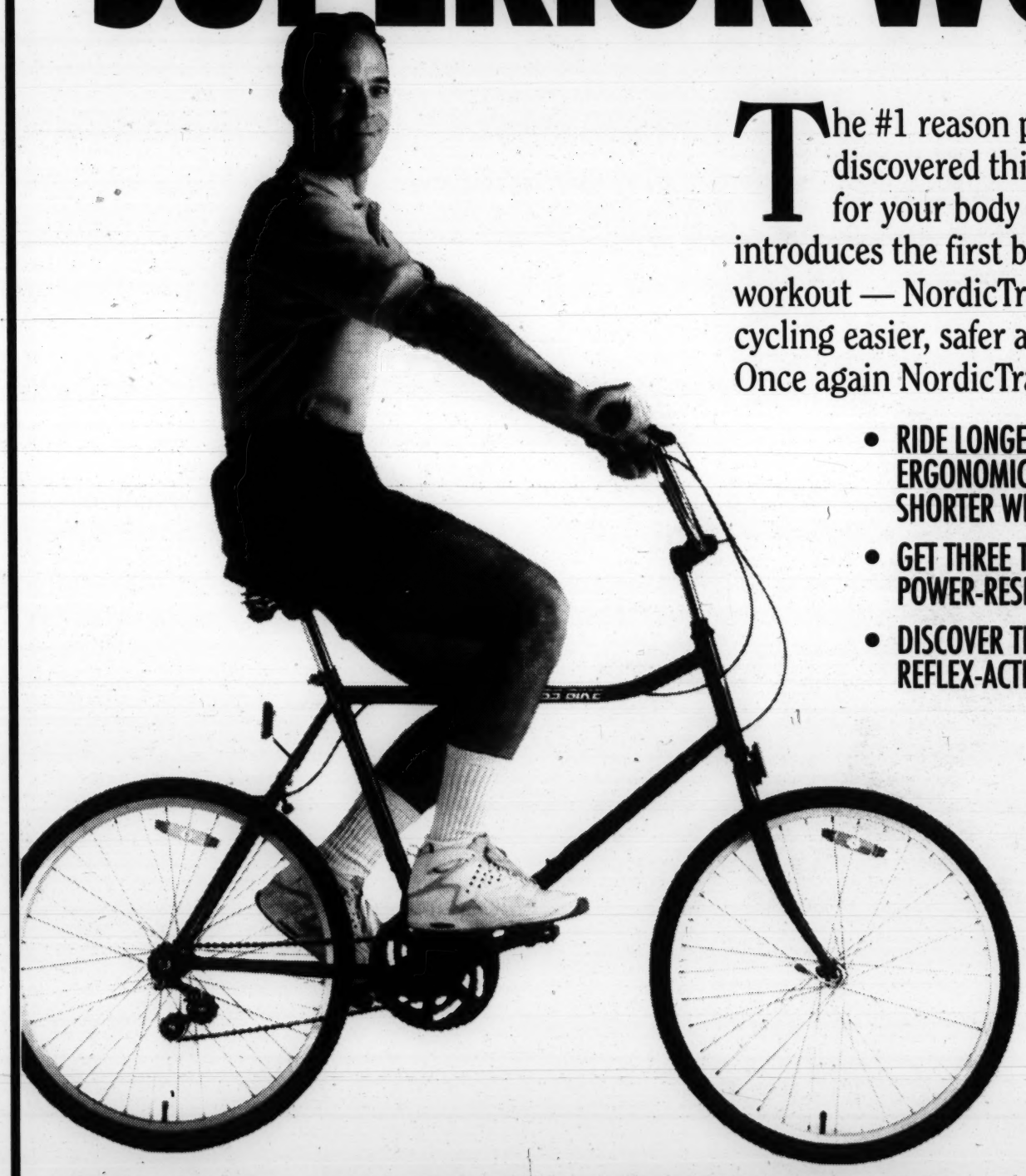

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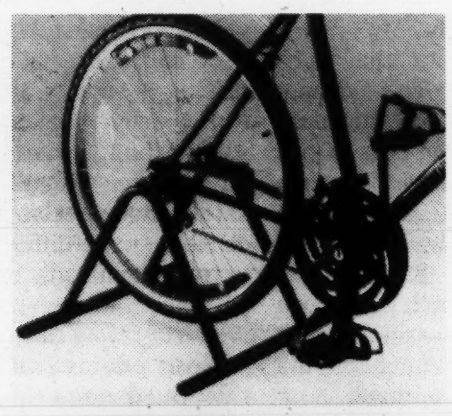

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The Home Forum.

Rita Dove: a Chorus of Voices

FROM this slight and solitary woman, what a chorus of voices – bold, sly, anguished, determined – and each one is spotlighted briefly on the darkened stage of story or poem. It's almost as if Rita Dove, poet and novelist, is at the height of her craft when she is giving voice to the collection of presences that have, subtly or dramatically, shaped her life. Even during conversation, characters from her memory or art appear and disappear, adding their particular slant to an anecdote, spicing the talk with echoes from the past.

Recently named the next poet laureate of the United States, Ms. Dove is a professor of English at the University of Virginia. In 1987, her collection "Thomas and Beulah" made her one of the youngest winners ever of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. The book encapsulates the history of the 20th-century African-American migration to the North by focusing on her grandparents and the family they created in Ohio. In "Grace Notes," the poems are perhaps more intimate but still resonate with the voices of friends and family, still captivate us with her startling sense of the particular. Her recent novel, "Through the Ivory Gate," explores the way the chords of memory and imagination are blended in the composition of a life.

Music is a motif that runs throughout Rita Dove's writing, coming to represent the pure realm of spirit at the core of our experience. Her verse, by turns, wails like a jazz riff, soars like a gospel choir, and simmers with a classical elegance. She reminds us of the communal power we inherit along with our spoken language and the beauty of the voices that are, perhaps now, singing within us as well.

* * *

Steven Ratiner: One of the central features in your poetry and fiction is the power of history and memory. Where does that drive to tell the story originate in your life?

Rita Dove: Well, it begins really with two things: One of them, that I wasn't represented in history ... either as a female or as a black person. And also the sense that ordinary people are not represented in history, that history gives you the tale of heroes, basically.... You are right, it is certainly something that has not only fascinated me, I'd almost say haunted me all these years. Also because I think that history is a very powerful weapon. If you can edit someone out of history then the next generation, the one who doesn't have a memory [of certain events] anymore, won't have anything to go on. And cultural memory is remarkably short in our day and age because communities are disintegrating, so there is no oral or communal sense of carrying on a tradition.

As a poet, are you a carrier of history?

A carrier of history of a particular sort. I think that in "Thomas and Beulah" what I was hoping to hand down [to the next generation] was a sense of two very normal people living through a period of incredible change in the United States.... But also I am interested in recovering a sense that we, as individual human beings, can connect to the universe.

What I love in your writing is your astounding sense of the particular, as if we were living through the experiences. Some provide us with a small glimpse of a black America we'd otherwise never see.

Well, that is just marvelous, because I think if we can, as human beings, enter those worlds even for an instant, then it makes it a little more difficult to hate someone else because they are different, to treat them badly or to kill them.

Your poems portray the lived experience of history. Two examples from "Grace Notes" come to mind: "Summit Beach" seems to bring back the figure of your grandmother Beulah again, and "Crab Boil" centers on a girl I took to be a young Rita Dove.

In each poem, a small personal experience is depicted center stage with just a hint of the larger historical forces churning in the background. The phrase "the Negro beach" is enough to conjure the racial climate in the 1920's. But Beulah seems hardly aware of this when she "climbed Papa's shed and stepped off/ the tin roof into the blue,/ with her parasol and invisible wings." If not the tide of history, there must be something else that supports this woman, gives her the confidence to take that brave step.

I think the "something else" in that poem particularly is a sense of self, a sense of love, that comes from family and the community. I keep coming back to the community.... What will always keep you going is that sense of being buoyed up by others, others who understand, others who care, who are maybe going through the same things. The girl in "Crab Boil" doesn't quite understand the segregated beach business but she has learned, even at that age, to look and pay attention to her elders.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVEN RATINER

'The music is so important to me. One of the ways that a poem convinces us is not just the words, the meaning of the words, but the sound of them in our mouths.'

– Rita Dove, the next US poet laureate

But you create an interesting tension between the communal sway and the will of the individual. The girl keeps on questioning. She almost empathizes with the crabs captured in the pail, especially with Aunt Helen's comment, "Look at that –/ a bunch of niggers, not/ a-one get out 'fore the others pull him/ back." They tell the girl the crabs will feel no pain, and she finally accepts their claim. "I decide to believe this: I'm hungry."

But you have the feeling that she goes with their wisdom, yet she doesn't believe it totally. I think, really, she bows to the exigency of the situation. But I think that is the best of all possible kinds of relationships between individuals and the community, because I am not advocating that we be subsumed by some kind of group. We are all individuals who may share in various groups certain things that make us feel that we have a community. But the individual should never be obliterated or even blurred by that connection with the community. Even Beulah in "Summit Beach" – she wants to fly!

You've talked about the intellectual discipline in your household, the knowledge that your parents tried to "armor" you with as a girl.

Absolutely. It wasn't that rules were laid down, except in terms of television, which was a certain numbers of hours a week ... but a feeling in the household was that the only ticket you have to a happy life is to do the best you can in whatever you do.

And the one place we were allowed to go practically any time was the library, but we had to read all the books that we got....

And I remember coming back from the library once nearly in tears, I was about 11 or 12 or so, because they wouldn't let me check out Françoise Sagan. And I had read something in a magazine about this young girl who had written a risqué novel, and I wanted to read it. I think it was "Bonjour, Tristesse," and they said, "No, you can't read it, you are not an adult." And it was the first time someone had told me I couldn't read anything, so I came home and my mother wrote a note that said, "Let her check out any book she wants." I think they felt if it was too old for us then we would get bored quickly.

That made a great impact on me; I think it was one of those moments when I realized that they trusted me.

Knowing how you feel about this, I thought it was curious how often you touch on the sense of "forbidden experience" in your writing. In one poem, there are Uncle Millet's stories, which you weren't suppose to hear but somehow memorized. There is the sense of unbridled fantasy in another, but you say "it's not the sort of story/ you'd tell your mother."

Forbidden stories are powerful stories. They are forbidden for reasons, and there are different reasons. But forbidden stories are those that can somehow change your life.... And as wonderful as my childhood was, there certainly was a sense that they were watching over us and they were not going to let us stray from a certain kind of path.... That kind of dreaming that takes you out of the influence of the family is not something you tell your mother, because you instinctively know ... they will start tightening the reigns. It is also the feeling of the individual's imagination being a dangerous thing for the community. I'm not trying to say communities are all about this: This is a give-and-take thing. There are good things, and there are things that are confining.

In the last several years, we've had an experience where the larger community wants to censor art and individual imagination. Society is not willing, as were your parents, to turn over complete responsibility to the individual.

It is extremely dangerous. It is dangerous for the spiritual health of the world. You cannot keep a mind sequestered, you know; it will break out some way. It is offering people trust that they will be humane. The idea is that if one has grown up in an honest, compassionate kind of way, a disciplined way, then no knowledge is dangerous, because a person will take that knowledge and be able to think about it and be able to figure out what is wrong or right.

Music is another pervasive presence throughout your writing. Was that also something inherited from your parents?

Records were always being played in our house, very different kinds of records. There was a Bessie Smith and Josh White, but there were also Fauré sonatas. My paternal grandparents did play in-

struments, the mandolin and the guitar. My parents, though, did not play instruments. It's odd, but when we were 10, it was time to pick an instrument, so I learned cello, as [one of my characters] Virginia does, and played cello all through college and even beyond.... But I think music was one of those first experiences I had of epiphany, of something clicking, of understanding something beyond, deeper than rational sense.

In the novel, when the character of Virginia plays the cello for the first time in years, you write that "the high notes in each phrase insinuated themselves into her blood: above the treadmill of chordal progressions a luminous melody unscrolling and floating away, high in the upper ether, where there was no memory or hurt." How does music or art accomplish such transformation?

If I knew how music did that, I would be one up on everybody. I think that is one of the magical things about music – and you're right it is not just music, but any art – when the pleasure of its making, or the pleasure of the journey that it takes you on transcends [not only] the memories of pain you might have, but even the pain that might be contained in what it is talking about. An incredibly sad piece can make one exhilarated. I think this is one of the secrets of art, how it can help us, not digest the pain, but in a certain way take in that pain or hurt in our life and still prevail. It lifts you up over it but it doesn't let you forget it.

Let me ask you about the music of your writing – not just "music" as a motif but the musical textures you create with your words. There's one passage where Thomas was speaking: "How long has it been...?/ Too long. Each note slips/ into querulous rebuke, fingerpads/ scored with pain, shallow ditches/ to rut in like a runaway slave/ with a barking heart." It almost feels like a tenor sax belting out a bebop phrase.

The music is so important to me, I can't really emphasize that too much. I think that one of the ways that a poem convinces us is not just the words, the meaning of the words, but the sound of them in our mouths, the way they increase our heartbeat or not, the amount of breath it takes to say a sentence, whether it will make us breathless at the end or whether it gives us time for repose or contemplation. It's the way our entire body gets involved in the language being spoken. And even if we are reading the poem silently, those rhythms exist.

There are times when, in fact, the sound, the music, leads me as much as any sense. In that section of Thomas's, I wanted to get across some of the frustration he was feeling as he tries to go back to the mandolin and he is rusty and he can't make it work the way he wants to. It's one thing to say that in plain old language, but to make the rhythms jagged and back-and-forth and full of stops and starts and aggravations, that then kind of explode in, as you said, a sax riff, a little bit of blues – this was for me a way of conveying that more deeply than saying he was "frustrated."

When you make a poem, what good is it in your life, and what good do you hope it might be when a reader receives it?

As human beings, we are endowed with this incredible gift to articulate our feelings and to communicate them to each other in very sophisticated ways. And writing a poem in which the almost inexpressible is being expressed is almost the pinnacle of the human achievement. So in that sense it is silly to ask what good is *that*, to reach the pinnacle.

The other thing is that when a reader reads a poem – I know that every time that I write a poem ... I try to remember or try to imagine that reader – the reader that I was – curled up on the couch, the moment of opening a book and absolutely having my world fall away and entering into another one and feeling there was one other voice that was almost inside of me, we were so close.

In writing a poem, if the reader on the other end can come up and say: "I know what you meant, I mean, I felt that too" – then we are a little less alone in the world, and that to me is worth an awful lot.

Steven Ratiner

Summit Beach, 1921

The Negro beach jumped to the twitch
of an oil drum tattoo and a mandolin,
sweaters flying off the finest brown shoulders
this side of the world.

She sat by the fire, shawl moored
by a single fake cameo. She was cold,
thank you, she did not care to dance –
the scar on her knee winking
with the evening chill.

Papa had said don't be so fast,
you're all you've got. So she refused
to cut the wing, though she let the boys
bring her sassafras tea and drank it down
neat as a dropped hankie.

Her knee had itched in the cast
till she grew mean from bravery.
She could wait, she was gold.
When the right man smiled it would be
music skittering up her calf

like a chuckle. She could feel
the breeze in her ears like water,
like the air as a child when
she climbed Papa's shed and stepped off
the tin roof into blue,

with her parasol and invisible wings.

Rita Dove

The poem 'Summit Beach, 1921' is excerpted from 'Grace Notes: Poems' by Rita Dove, © 1989 by Rita Dove, reprinted with permission of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

No Strangers

MUCH has been written and said about racism, ethnic strife, and the hatred of "foreigners" or guest workers in certain countries. And many people acknowledge the need to overcome these feelings in order that more unity and progress may come to mankind. The question for many of us is: how to do it?

The Old Testament in the Bible speaks more than once of the need to treat people fairly, including strangers, or foreigners, in order to be in harmony with God, the source of all good. This point is made even more directly in the New Testament in Christ Jesus' teachings. He said that we are to love God first and then to love our neighbors as ourselves. That includes people who may be quite different from us culturally and socially.

Jesus' life of preaching and teaching made clear that God's message of love for man applies to everyone. Jesus' teachings show us that we are all the spiritual offspring of one divine Father who bestows His love impartially. Since our relationship with God is direct and unbreakable, each of us has full access to divine Love. Under God's government, no one can deprive you or me or anyone of what is rightfully ours as His children. And since all good comes from God, divine Love, this direct relationship with Him means we can trust Him to give us what we need—as any good father would.

The Christian Science Monitor's Religious Article

Accepting these facts does two things. It helps to eliminate fear of loss—loss of jobs, homes, peace—that often underlies hatred of strangers. And it shows us that since we are God's children, we are members of one spiritual family. This eliminates the belief that we are strangers because it brings us into relationship with each other through our unity with God.

The Epistle to the Ephesians states this beautifully when it speaks of Christ Jesus and what he accomplished for mankind. It says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

This concept of God's household is a spiritual fact that can help each of us deal with all people. Here is an example: The manner of a man I met seemed shifty and slick. I felt very uncomfortable in his presence. I had dealt successfully with people of diverse backgrounds, but I had never come face to face with those characteristics before.

Since I expected to have continuing contact with this man, I turned to prayer for a solution. As I did this, I remembered a major point Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, makes in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures;* namely, that God is the only Mind and that man is Mind's idea, or reflection. Our purpose, then, is to strive both to express this Mind and to see its effects in our lives. In one place in *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy puts it this way: "With one Father, even God, the whole family of man would be brethren; and with one Mind and that God, or good, the brotherhood of man would consist of Love and Truth, and have unity of Principle and spiritual power which constitute divine Science."

I prayed, with more than a little fervor, to know that this one Mind was governing me and the situation. At my next meeting with the man, a remark I made took our conversation in a completely new direction. His manner changed. In fact, it was delightful. The result was a real "meeting of minds," and from that time on I had no further problems working with him. In fact I enjoyed it. This is a small example, perhaps, but it taught me a valuable lesson about loving strangers by understanding that the one Mind, God, is governing all of us. And in Mind's household we are neither strangers nor foreigners but fellow-citizens of God's kingdom—joined together in His love.

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"First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."

EDITORIALS

Toward Asia's Security

GIVEN Asia's growing economic strength, it comes as little surprise that several countries there are making tentative moves to develop a way to discuss regional security issues.

Recently, Japan and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met in Singapore to discuss security topics. Among those of most immediate concern were the high levels of piracy at sea, the threat that the Khmer Rouge continues to pose in Cambodia, and especially North Korea's decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) next month.

Of broader concern, however, is the arms race that prosperity has fueled to defend economic gains.

That the initiative for the meeting came from Japan is encouraging. It is another signal, along with its role in United Nations efforts in Cambodia, that Japan is slowly taking a more active role in regional affairs, one commensurate with its economic influence.

While bitter memories of their treatment by Japan during World War II remain, the ASEAN nations' willingness to hold the meeting also suggests that a recognition of the need to defend the region's economic and political progress is gaining strength.

Still at issue, according to one report, is whether to include China and Vietnam in any future meetings. The answer should be yes. Given their geopolitical roles in the region and their economic potential, leaving them out of security discussions would be a mistake, while including them would bring them into yet another forum where market-based economics and democratic principles are the norm.

The Clinton administration has expressed its support for Asians' efforts to develop a forum for dealing with regional security issues, as well as its desire to remain fully engaged in the region. Indeed, the State Department announced May 24 that top United States officials are scheduled to meet with North Korean representatives in Washington June 2 to try to convince Pyongyang to reverse its NPT decision.

This effort, which includes Japan, China, and South Korea, serves as a reminder to those in Washington who want the US to reduce its military commitment overseas that, even as Asians begin to evolve their own approach to regional security, the United States role there remains vital.

Foreign Policy Focus

THE American role in a world where 50 years of cold-war rules and definitions have fallen apart is a serious matter. Like it or not, the United States is looked to for the new rules – the values and behaviors that get priority now that Soviet communism has ended.

This role is not something President Clinton can duck, even if he believes he was elected to "focus like a laser" on the economy and health care. So far, the administration has sent out a confused message about its foreign policy – what role it will play, what values it stands for.

Much of the confusion stems from Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent trip to Europe on the question of Bosnia. The administration was going to "consult" with its allies, Secretary Christopher said. That sounds reasonable. Yet foreign policy in an undefined world cannot be conducted like an Aspen Institute conference. In diplomatic language, "consult" means "we don't really have a program." The US president talked tough about the use of force in Bosnia, but when pushed there was little resolve behind the words. Now the perception grows in European capitals that the US is weak.

Christopher's testimony last week before Congress about Bosnia adds to this perception. Clear evidence to the contrary, Christopher said "all sides" were responsible for atrocities. He declined to call the killing of some 130,000 Bosnians a genocide – thus removing an imperative for action. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan commented that Christopher's testimony "legitimizes genocide."

The recent agreement among allies to adopt a 13-step program for "safe havens" in Bosnia barely papers-over the perception of weakness. The plan already is deteriorating into disagreement: UN members don't like it, the Bosnians and Serbs are opposed.

US policy has real-world consequences. Saddam Hussein is massing troops on the border of the safe haven area in Iraq; perhaps he wants to test global resolve. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia have been quiet, but the vote there is not over. If European stability is defined as a "European problem" only, how long will it be before US troops there are pulled out, removing an important security symbol?

The values and actions Mr. Clinton stands for have yet to be articulated. It is not too early to ask how seriously, in light of recent actions, the allies will take Christopher. Clinton's foreign policy has yet to demonstrate its core values and themes.

Israel Faces Likely Leadership Change Amidst Peace Initiative

Likud leader Benjamin Natanyahu is poised to take charge

By Alon Ben-Meir

THE opposition to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his handling of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations is gaining in momentum in Israel. Benjamin Natanyahu, recently elected Likud leader and author of a new book, "A Place Among Nations" (Bantam), is leading the fight to topple Mr. Rabin, vowing not to surrender strategic territory, even if that means the collapse of the peace process. Mr. Natanyahu argues against major territorial concessions, citing: (a) the strategic need for high ground (b) the lack of any democratic system in the Arab world, and (c) the continued Arab rejection of Israel in principle. Although he correctly predicates Israel's ultimate national security on deterrence and on peace, neither he nor any other Likud leader has explained how they will make peace without major territorial concessions.

On the question of strategic territory, one need not be a military expert to appreciate the value of the territorial depth that the Golan and the West Bank offer especially in a state of war. Even a missile attack that could inflict massive damage to Israel's heartland would still require ground troops to cross such a "buffer zone" to consolidate any military gain.

Under conditions of peace, however, Israeli military experts confirm that the value of strategic territories diminishes considerably. In addition, Israel's military power offers such credible deterrence that the Arabs would be hard-pressed to put it to the test. This is not to suggest, however, that Israel should immediately withdraw its forces and rely on deterrence alone.

The Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai was completed only after Israel secured safety requirements, including the two most advanced air bases in the Negev, permanent demilitarization of the Sinai, and the stationing of United Nations troops to monitor compliance. These and other security steps can be adopted on the Golan and the West Bank. Israeli withdrawal must be done in stages over a period of 10 to 15 years, allowing a full peace to evolve and become a way of life on both sides of the border.

Second, a strong argument can also be made regarding the Arab states' lack of democratic systems, which could make peace tenuous in the face of opposing forces. The Middle East is characterized by despotism, economic disparity, and a lack of political legitimacy. These elements provide a perfect recipe for continued strife and unpredictability. The question is: How long are Natanyahu and the Likud prepared to wait for the Arab states to reach that elusive political maturity? It may take two or three more generations before democratic systems in the Arab states reach a semblance of Western maturity. Even then, their brand of democracy will be quite different from what Natanyahu envisions.

Algeria's brief experiment in democracy gave the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) party a stunning upset victory, capturing more than 60 percent of the national assemblies; they stood to win a decisive majority in the second round had the election not been nullified by a "white coup" led by the defense minister Khaled Nezzar. Certainly, a democratically elected Islamic regime in Jordan or Egypt would not be more sympathetic to Israel nor reliable partners for peace. The Egyptian-Israeli peace was not predicated on "Egyptian democracy" but on Israeli and Egyptian national requirements. Israel's deterrence safeguards the peace.

Finally, Natanyahu argues that there is no disagreement about the ultimate goal of Israel's destruction among the various Arab fundamentalist and radical Marxist groups. What separates them is only tactics: whether Israel should be eliminated in one or more stages. Natanyahu cites the long history of the Arab world's refusal to accept the Jews as equals, their enmity and hatred, and their vow to liquidate Israel, as the PLO charter still attests to this day. The truth in this regard is cynically stretched to play on the Israeli public's anxiety and genuine concern with national security. Natanyahu and his Likud Party must accept the fact that there is a practical change, born of necessity, in the Arab states' attitudes toward Israel. Their willingness to make peace has evolved over decades, during which the Middle East has witnessed dramatic geopolitical changes caused by five Arab-Israeli wars, the Israeli-Egyptian peace, two Gulf wars, the end of the cold war and the rise of Islamic militancy.

THE disintegration of the Soviet Union (Syria's main benefactor) and Israel's military preponderance rendered the Arabs' war option, if there ever was one, invalid. The Arab states know that they cannot win a war against Israel by conventional means. And if they push Israel to the brink, through the use of mass destruction weapons, they will suffer retaliatory strikes of catastrophic proportions. They have also come to realize that Iran and its fundamentalist surrogates, not Israel, are the real enemies. Therefore, making peace with Israel has become for the Arab states a necessity for survival.

What are the alternatives? How much longer can Israel remain a garrison state? How many more Israelis and Arabs must die in pursuit of false promises? Nearly seven out of every 10 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were born after the Six-Day War in 1967. These youths know only Israeli occupation, depravation, and dislocation. The Intifadah would pale against the wave of violence that would ensue should the prospects for an agreement appear to have been lost.

Natanyahu, the man who could be the next prime minister, shoulders a special responsibility. If he wants to lead Israel toward that special "place among the nations," he must put Israel's national interests above party politics and seek the only viable alternative – relinquishing territories for real peace.

■ *Alon Ben-Meir, a New York based political analyst specializing in Middle Eastern affairs, is the author of "A Framework for Arab-Israeli Peace," (Robert Publishing Group, St. Louis).*

OPINION/ESSAYS

Resounding vote for independence marks first step toward genuine democracy

Eritreans Win Nationhood

By Leah Leatherbee and Dale Bricker

ON May 24, Eritreans celebrated the official birth of Africa's newest country. Eritrea, a nation of 3.2 million on the Red Sea, won de facto independence on the battlefield in 1991 after a bloody 30-year war with Ethiopia. Last month it received recognition for its new status when an internationally monitored referendum delivered a resounding 98-percent mandate for separation.

Two days after the independence day festivities, however, war-ravaged Eritrea had already slipped from world attention and returned to the daunting task of national reconstruction. The Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) has called economic development its top priority, but the former rebel movement must not delay an equally important task: establishing a fully democratic government by consent.

While some analysts have declared that the referendum's successful completion ushers in a new era of popular sovereignty and stability in Eritrea, that conclusion is premature. What the balloting does reveal is overwhelming support for independence. It also proves that the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which led the liberation struggle and formed the PGE, can mobilize Eritrea, a feat of no small proportions.

However, it is not certain that future elections will be free and fair, or that Eritreans outside the EPLF leadership will have a role in determining the nation's future political direction.

When inevitable disagreements over national policy emerge, the EPLF's democratic impulses will be seriously tested. It now has the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of Eritreans and has moved to broaden popular participation in the administration of its liberated zones by establishing elected village, municipal, district, and provincial councils.

But genuine pluralism and the EPLF's pre-victory platform have not been permitted to evolve. The platform guarantees for political parties and associations to organize after independence. But, despite its 1987 embrace of a multiparty system, the EPLF postponed multipartyism until after the referendum. Recent public pronouncements alluding to a "chaotic political situation" indicate that the ban on competitive parties will be extended for up to five more years. Since the former rebel movement claims to be a broad "front" representing all sectors of Eritrean society, it is apparently confident that all acceptable perspectives are also represented within its ranks. In Eritrea's post-liberation atmosphere, this presumption finds support down to the grass roots. One is struck by the attitude among many EPLF partisans that those not in solidarity with it must be enemies of Eritrea.

Moves to quell pluralism are disturbing in a country as diverse as Eritrea, which houses nine major ethnic groups and three religious traditions.

The EPLF says it will continue its effective monopoly on domestic politics at least "until the Eritrean people ratify a constitution and establish a permanent government."

During this transition period, the EPLF Central Committee will serve as the legislature, an advisory council headed by EPLF General Secretary Isaias Afewerki will act as executive, and the judiciary is to be selected by the Front leadership. Thus, the government and EPLF are to remain indistinguishable until the Front's eventual dissolution, which it promises after the constitutional system is established.

As unsettling as its approach to political rights is the EPLF's record on civil liberties. Its platform guarantees freedom of the press, speech, association, and peaceful assembly, yet several serious deviations from these commitments have already occurred. According to the minister of information, independent points of view in Eritrea are amply represented in the "Letters to the Editor" section of the print media, which, like radio, is controlled by the EPLF.

Ethiopian journalists, known to oppose Eritrean independence, were prevented from freely visiting Eritrea in the period leading up to the referendum, and activities of the one local human rights group were suspended by the regime shortly before the balloting. Equally disturbing are reports indicating the disappearance of 10 alleged collaborators with the old regime and the detention without trial of a number of others suspected of opposing the EPLF.

These initial moves to quell pluralism are disturbing in a country as diverse as Eritrea, which houses nine major ethnic groups and three religious traditions.

Although the election of local councils offers a vehicle for the transmission of aspirations and complaints to the leadership, it is hard to imagine a genuine democracy if Eritreans are not permitted the fundamental rights of expression, association, and assembly.

There is no single, correct method for a new nation emerging from repression to chart democracy. Eritrea has a distinct advantage in the commitment of its leaders to the common welfare. But the very tactics that enabled the EPLF to prevail in its struggle against Ethiopian dictatorship could undermine attempts to establish a truly representative form of government.

Transparency and tolerance for dissent, for example, may be unthinkable during a military campaign, but are indispensable to any democratic system.

History is replete with examples of regimes originally committed but ultimately corrupted. They share a number of attributes, chief among them total control over the process of nation-building and orchestrations of unity and popular endorsement. It would be tragic if the Eritrean people were to add a chapter to that sad chronicle.

The EPLF will not have accomplished its mission of bringing self-determination to Eritrea, however, until it has permitted the new country's citizens to exercise the basic right to choose their leaders and their destiny freely and regularly.

■ *Leah Leatherbee is director of the Horn of Africa Program for The Fund for Peace. Dale Bricker is African affairs specialist for Freedom House. They served as referendum observers at polling places set up for Eritreans in Eritrea and the US, respectively.*

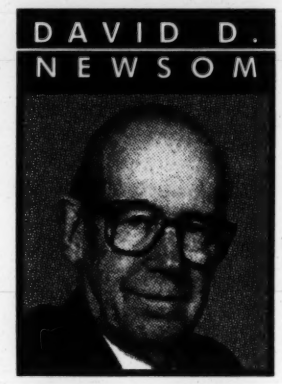
Getting Intelligence From 'Outs' Not Easy

IN two Arab countries today, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, militant opposition groups pose potential threats to the interests of the United States. The situation raises a familiar diplomatic dilemma: How can US embassy officers learn more about these groups without direct contacts with movement leaders?

Arguments in favor of such contacts are many. When possible threats to major US interests are involved, the knowledge gained can assist in evaluating those threats. Foundations can be laid for future relationships in the event the opposition comes to power.

In nations where a regime may be widely unpopular, meetings with known opponents can suggest to the local population that Washington is not totally committed to supporting that regime.

The government in power and its friends, abroad and in the US, will argue that the US can learn all it needs to know from official sources and that any other efforts represent interference in internal affairs. They will express the fear that opposition groups will exploit any meetings to imply external endorsement, thus undermining the existing regime's authority. And they will cast doubt on whether such groups, especially if they have an anti-American bias, will provide information or comment of any value. Each of the concerns is valid.



Differences obviously exist from country to country. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are not the only countries in the Arab world in which the status quo is threatened by extremist movements. But the US has important, if not vital, interests in those two countries. Recent low-level meetings between US diplomats and Islamic groups in both countries have generated concern in Riyadh, Cairo, and Washington. In the case of Egypt, Washington has had to explain that such meetings were "inadvertent."

The problem is long-lived. Active efforts to learn more about the Chinese Communist opponents of the Chiang Kai-shek regime ruined the careers of several US foreign service officers who pursued the contacts.

In the aftermath of the fall of the Shah of Iran, questions were asked in Washington about why the US had not attempted to meet with representatives of the Ayatollah Komeini. The answer lay in the strong opposition of the Shah to any diplomatic meetings with religious leaders, Carter administration concern that contacts could be misconstrued, and the reliance of US intelligence on the Shah's secret police, SAVAK.

Why should the US probe independently into the political affairs of a friendly government? The reason lies in experience in many areas where governments friendly to the US have been overthrown and Washington has been surprised. Iraq, Libya, and Ethiopia are examples.

The threatened regimes either were not candid about their vulnerabilities or were unaware of them. What they did share was designed largely to convince the US that the regime was strong, popular, and secure.

Why can't US intelligence agencies assume the task of meeting with opposition leaders and relieve the diplomat of the vulnerability and criticism of such actions?

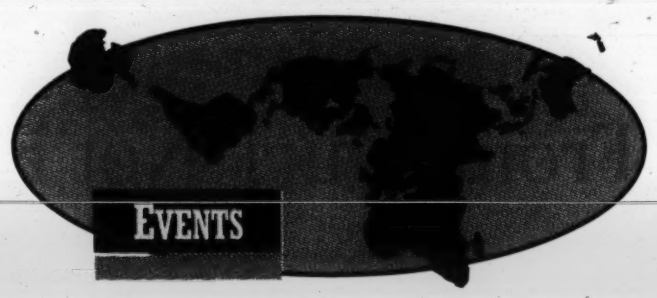
The clandestine intelligence approach has disadvantages. Revelation of US intelligence activities unknown to the local government can generate stronger suspicions and protests than overt meetings with embassy officers.

Representatives of the US media frequently meet with militant opposition leaders in key countries. But, given the professional reluctance of journalists to share information with government sources, and because opposition figures are conscious that they are speaking to a public audience, such meetings are not satisfactory substitutes for official encounters.

Whatever the country, it remains highly desirable for the US to find the means of knowing directly the character and objectives of key opposition groups.

Accomplishing this in countries where Washington has substantial interests continues to be one of the most difficult balancing acts in diplomacy.

■ *David D. Newsom, former undersecretary of state, is Cumming Memorial Professor of International Affairs, University of Virginia.*



CHINA'S 'MFN' STATUS TO BE CONDITIONAL

President Clinton has decided to renew favorable trade privileges to China for one year on condition the Communist regime improves its record on human rights, trade, and weapon sales to radical governments, administration officials said May 24. The president is consulting with congressional leaders on the precise wording of conditions that would extend most-favored nation status to China, the officials said on condition of anonymity. Mr. Clinton must announce his decision on China's trade status by June 3, the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Chinese Army's crackdown on the 1989 democracy movement.

Clinton health plan

President Clinton has decided not to heed economic advisers who wanted him to significantly scale back the basic package of health benefits he has promised all Americans, an administration official says. Instead, Clinton has given a firm commitment to a broad benefits package, with coverage for most Americans in such areas as immunizations, mammograms, and regular checkups for healthy children.

Clintonomics

The Clinton administration's much-reduced jobs bill is staggering toward a vote in the full House on May 26. The House Appropriations Committee on May 24 reduced the proposed bill of slightly more than $1 billion by $200 million amid objections from both parties over other government programs to be cut to pay for the jobs package. The House is slated to vote May 27 on the president's full economic plan, and House leaders say the measure may not pass unless Clinton compromises on the controversial energy tax.

HDTV sharpens picture

Wrangling among industry groups over the best technology for high-definition television ended May 24 with an agreement by competing companies to work together. Now, they'll build a system using the best of each technology to be tested as soon as possible and presented next year to the Federal Communications Commission.

'Water Buffalo' case ends

Five black women called "water buffalo" by a fellow University of Pennsylvania student dropped their racial-harassment claim on May 24, complaining that the accused man had turned the news media against them. The case against Eden Jacobowitz had been seen as a case of political correctness run amok and an embarrassment for university president Sheldon Hackney, President Clinton's choice to head the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Rule by decree in Guatemala

Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elías dissolved Congress and the Supreme Court May 25 and said he would rule by decree in the Central American country until a constitutional assembly is formed. Mr. Serrano, speaking over television after weeks of protests against the high cost of living, said an election would be held within 60 days to choose an assembly to discuss changes in the constitution. The president also fired Guatemala's human rights prosecutor, who has criticized kidnappings and political murders.

Mexican cardinal killed

Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo, his driver, and five others were killed on May 24 in a deadly cross-fire between drug traffickers at Guadalajara's international airport. The Vatican on May 25 deplored the killings.

Iran attacks opposition

Iranian warplanes attacked two Iranian rebel bases inside Iraq on May 25, the Iranian opposition said. The attacks were the first major Iranian action reported by Mujahedeen Khalq, or People's Warriors, against their bases in Iraq in more than a year.

Cannes winners

"Farewell to My Concubine" by Chinese director Chen Kaige and "The Piano" by New Zealand's Jane Campion are co-winners of the Golden Palm award at the Cannes Film Festival. Britain's David Thewlis won the best actor award May 24 for his portrayal of Johnny in Mike Leigh's film "Naked," and American Holly Hunter was named best actress for her role as the mute Scotswoman Ada in "The Piano."

– Compiled by Max Boot

HEY! WE WIN!
BOSNIA SERB
LATEST BOSNIA PLAN
WASHINGTON D.C.
WARREN CHRISTOPHER EXPLAINS IT ALL TO YOU
WELL... UM...
SAFE AREAS AND... ER... WE WILL THEN DO SOMETHING
IF IT DOESN'T RAIN TOO HARD IF THEY...
JANZIGER
The Christian Science Monitor

World War II history, debate over Constitution shape push-ahead, fall-back policy on Yugoslavia

Germany's Balkan Tightrope

By Francine S. Kiefer
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

BONN

SETTING policy on the former Yugoslavia has turned out to be a tricky balancing act for Germany, with Bonn first taking a high profile on issues, then disappearing into the background.

For example:

■ The new initiative calling for "safe havens" for Bosnian Muslims, pushed so strongly by Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, made its debut in Berlin, not Washington, at a meeting between Mr. Kozyrev and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel on May 17. The Germans endorsed the strategy and saw Kozyrev safely off to Washington. But they did not accompany him and were not involved in the talks that firmed up the "joint program of action."

THE WORLD FROM BONN

■ This winter, the Germans stood alone in Europe when they called for a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina and when Mr. Kinkel began to talk up Western military intervention in Bosnia. By the time US Secretary of State Warren Christopher came to Bonn on May 6, however, Kinkel was already backpedalling, urging restraint, and warning that military action could lead to an escalation of the war.

■ Just over two years ago, Bonn was out in front on the issue of recognizing the former Yugoslav republics and more or less railroaded recognition of Croatia and Slovenia through the European Community. Now the German press, if not the government, says recognition was a mistake.

Bonn's pattern of push ahead and fall back stems from the unique circumstances surrounding Germany and former Yugoslavia.

The assertive aspect is borne of the country's immediate and more distant history. Having just experienced the right to self determination through German unification, it was not surprising that a year later many Germans strongly supported independence for the former Yugoslav republics. Considering Germans' perceived moral duty to denounce genocide wherever it may appear, it is also not surprising that they began to sing the interventionist song after the horrors of "ethnic cleansing" were revealed.

On the other hand, several factors contribute to restraint in German policy. One is Bonn's long-held interpretation of its Constitution as prohibiting German participation in combat missions outside the NATO area. Another brake is Germany's history of brutality in the Balkans during World War II. The Germans also have not figured out how to use their newfound political weight in world politics.

The result, according to a Foreign Office official, is that Germany is now having to weigh its words more carefully and speak "at first with a quiet voice" on the subject of the Balkan war. Right now, at least, it is falling in behind Britain and France, supporting the new strategy of containment, and arguing that it is the first step to the fulfillment of the Vance-Owen plan.

The German press, however, is much less restrained. Leftist, centrist, and conservative newspapers have labeled containment a cave-in to Serbian aggression, a deathblow to the Vance-Owen plan, and a surrender of moral high ground.

In the May 22 issue of the Westdeutsche Allgemeine newspaper, a centrist paper in the west German industrial city of Essen, a commentator blasted the government for "hasty" recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. "Bonn's activities opened trenches that made a common approach even more difficult."

But while the German press criticizes the government and its allies for their present and past course, it offers no more alternatives than the leaders it blames.